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Giving the other a human face

A counselling psychology perspective on the potential benefit of an intergroup encounter intervention between Israelis and Palestinians in Cyprus

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**Giving the other a human face: A counselling
psychology perspective on the potential
benefit of an intergroup encounter
intervention between Israelis and Palestinians
in Cyprus.**

By

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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Abstract

The need for intergroup reconciliation programmes emerges within the prevailing narrative of cultural conflict. However, failing attempts to resolve conflict at the macro (political) level of society have called for a unique approach that seeks to address these issues creatively at the first point of contact. Therefore, the last twenty years have seen a proliferation of non-profit group workshops and interventions aimed at engaging groups in a diversity of dialogue. To date there have been very few of these interventions that have addressed conflict therapeutically at the micro level of society– at which communities interact directly with another. The aim of this research was to conduct an explorative mixed method study into how an intergroup encounter intervention between Palestinians and Israelis could encourage participants to understand each other as human beings with shared fears, hopes and rights that may surpass assumptions of the other as ‘the enemy’, thereby encouraging participants to ‘give the other a human face’.

Conducted with a mixed group of twenty-eight participants, a pre-to-post survey measure analysed behavioural change, while a six-month follow-up interview with four participants explored the impact of participating in the acquaintance seminar on participants lived experiences. Final analysis indicated that while there was a trend towards behavioural change, the outcome was statistically non-significant. Meanwhile interpretive phenomenological analysis produced five key master themes that highlighted the impact of change and the contextual challenges of living with conflict. Managing new relationships and cultural barriers highlighted the key contextual challenges that participants were faced with. This highlights a need for investing resources and training into group conflict programmes that are promoted by key counselling psychology principles of practice. Overall, working with conflict is considered a relevant and unique opportunity for counselling psychologists and group facilitators, most of whom have no formal training or resources for working with conflict resolution in minority groups.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the potential benefit of an intergroup encounter intervention between Israelis and Palestinians in Cyprus. Otherwise known as ‘acquaintance seminars’, these interventions aim to facilitate open, positive and empathic dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis meeting each other on neutral terms. This topic emerges within the context of protracted social conflict; a theory developed by Edward Azar in *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict* to describe conflicts that are complex, enduring and violent in nature (1990). Azar’s theory opposed political realism and advocated a view of protracted conflict based on “collective security, community building and prosperity” (1990: p.12). Meanwhile, Bar-Tal argues that protracted intergroup conflicts continue due to rigid socio-psychological barriers between cultural leaders and society members (2000; 2007). These barriers relate to deeply rooted and rigid belief systems that are supported by cognitively biased and motivational processes resulting in a collective defence against new information and ways of thinking that might lead to peace making.

However, the aims of this research differ from traditional socio-political peace processes in the Middle East, which are typically organised on a macro (societal) level to reach specific goals, or draft peace resolutions between respective parties. The current research stems from a collaboration with Communications in the Middle East (COME) - a Dutch non-governmental organisation (NGO) which organises an annual 10-12-day intergroup seminar meeting in Cyprus for Israelis and Palestinians between the ages of 20 and 35. Whilst some research has already been conducted in this area, this intervention is situated in a neutral context that is directly removed from the conflict situation. Additionally, the intervention differs from those of existing research studies in that it included a pre- and post-measurement to address the first aim of the study, and adopted a longitudinal design to address the second. Consequently, this thesis sought to address an important gap in knowledge by investigating whether acquaintance seminars could affect participants’ behaviour and judgements, and if so, whether this change was positive and sustainable.

In theory, it is important to understand how foundational counselling principles can be utilized and applied to the context of intergroup encounters, and their potential to provide a foundation for change in the context of cultural conflict. These overarching principles which include empathy, non-judgment and acceptance (otherwise known as unconditional positive regard or UPR) are derived from the humanistic approach of person-centered theory that promotes the individual striving towards the potential of a ‘fully functioning person’ who is open to self-awareness and reflection, and who is flexible and adaptable to new experiences (Rogers, 1957). While the COME seminars are not explicitly based in this theoretical model, the aims of their work adopt a humanising approach that promote the practice and development of empathy, understanding and alternative ways of relating to the self and to others. The advantages of applying this psychological approach to the context of cultural conflict is that it provides a unique and meaningful opportunity for groups to engage in intimate forms of dialogue and activity that may allow them to communicate their feelings, listen to, and connect in ways they would otherwise be unable to in the context of their everyday lives. Furthermore, the application of this approach maintains the view that the autonomy of intergroup identity is central to a consideration of successful conflict resolution (Fisher, 2012).

Thus far, a minority of studies have examined the contribution of non-governmental organisations to the effort of change on a micro-level between individual members of society. In addressing this problematic issue, the strategy employed by third party non-governmental organisations (NGOs) centre on ‘workshops’ or ‘seminars’ that bring together respective parties under organised contexts of group dialogue (Rouhana and Kelman, 1994; Maoz and Bar-On, 2002). Dialogue, the driving force of relationships, promotes the forming of mutual understanding and confirmation and thereby serves a unique function for allowing individuals to feel recognised as human beings with unique values and identities (Montville, 1993). If this goal is to be achieved, openness, willingness and readiness to overcome difference as well examining themselves and their own actions are required, and the role of the third party (like that of a therapist), is to provide representation and confirmation to individuals, particularly those in conflict who may find it difficult to communicate directly with the other (Muench, 1963; Satir, 1967). Similarly, workshops aim to facilitate open and friendly dialogue between individuals, thus allowing each side the possibility for self-expression (Fisher, 2016). As such, individuals representing groups are encouraged by group facilitators to discuss fears and

deeply entrenched perceptions of the self in relation to the other group, so they can be de-stigmatized and mutually understood (Kreuzer, 2002). However, the success of such meetings is reliant upon the participants being encouraged to understand each other as human beings with shared fears, hopes and needs that may surpass the tendency to dehumanise the other, and effectively encourage participants to ‘give the other a human face’.

In this research, COME is represented as an example of an NGO fostering a climate of change between members of conflict groups, providing an opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians to meet each other on neutral grounds. By removing participants from the context which reminds of their role as members of a conflict, COME introduces an alternative channel through which group members can perceive one another. As such, the meetings arranged by COME aim to facilitate a neutral space for the participants to engage in joint activity that may encourage the groups to initiate a process of humanizing the other as opposed to emphasizing collective fears, biases in belief and prejudice of the other group (COME, 2013). The process challenges individuals to self-reflect and to give each other ‘a human face’ by meeting each other in a variety of intergroup activities. Within this context, Rogers and Shoemaker highlight the important of non-governmental organisations as the “change agents” that can encourage innovative change within these communities (1971: p.999).

Whilst a micro-level psychological orientation can contribute significantly to an analysis of intergroup conflict, Kreuzer (2002) argues that its scope of efficacy is limited, doing little to the initial de-escalation of the large-scale intractable conflict. However, COME believes that changes like this on the micro-level promoted by intergroup contact, could in the long-term lead to far more enduring macro-level changes in society by effectively ‘changing a culture from within’. When viewed from this perspective, it is possible to see that if the aims of these workshops are achieved, group members may be encouraged to build upon a mutual understanding that could be taken to an institutional level in which all members in society may work to develop a common goal for peaceful co-existence.

For the purposes stated above, the main aims of this thesis were to identify—have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*? And what aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful and not helpful in fostering change?

Firstly, the aim was to measure whether the intergroup acquaintance seminar between Israeli and Palestinian participants resulted in a change in the behaviour and perceptions of the individual participants. Surveys were administered to participants over the course of the meeting and a pre-post measure was used to evaluate changes in participants' behaviour and judgements of others following the experience. Secondly, the research project's unique contribution to this was to offer a more in-depth analysis than previously conducted through research in the field. Whilst collecting data from the most recent seminar, I also carried out an overall longitudinal measure approximately 6-months after the prospective meeting via in-depth interviews. From an analysis of the current literature, this project was unique in its exploration of behavioural change, by providing a comprehensive view of whether the seminars had any lasting effect on behaviour, judgments and perceptions of the other group (e.g. Malhotra and Liyanage, 2005; Lazarus, 2011).

As such, the theoretical foundations of this thesis were based primarily on the overarching principles of person-centered theory and how this contributed to an understanding of behaviour change. Equally, the mixed methodological approach described and underlying epistemology (see: *4.3 – Epistemology: rationale for proposed methods*) highlighted the overarching integrative approach to thesis, maintaining the idea that there are various ways in which human psychology can be explored and understood. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are considered to have value, even if their foundational assumptions (epistemology) contradict one another – hence the need to integrate them, thus developing a comprehensive understanding of human behaviour.

The following research may have far reaching implications in providing NGOs with greater understanding of how group meetings like those organised by COME are effective in minimising and resolving socio-political conflicts at the roots of society, encouraging individuals to understand one another and appreciate each other's unique and subjective experiences in the world. If core counselling principles can be effectively communicated in the context of micro-level intergroup interventions between Israelis and Palestinians (where research thus far has been scarcely conducted), the research can effectively lead to greater applications of this kind of intervention to the intercultural climate of other conflict situations (i.e. Russian-Ukrainian, Northern Ireland conflicts).

Effectively, “reconciliation is to understand both sides, to go to one side and describe the suffering being endured by the other side, and then to the other side, and

describe the suffering being endured by the first side” (Hanh, 2008: p. 69-70). In turn, this can initiate a humanising process whereby individuals in protracted conflict will learn to give one another a more human face through an understanding of mutual suffering and pain.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 General introduction

This chapter deals with the phenomena of cultural, ethnic, or territorial conflict, which have inspired debate amongst researchers of various disciplines over the nature of its resistance to traditional forms of diplomatic or political mediation. Due to the more often painful losses incurred by these conflicts, in lives as well as territory, approaches to conflict resolution have become the subject of greater revision, moving away from the political aims to more psychologically sensitive approaches.

Subsequently, this review examines a unique approach to the topic of conflict resolution or reconciliation that is inspired by existential and humanistic principles of counselling practice. These and their relation to the aims of this study will be examined alongside the literature on cultural conflict, exploring its relationship to group processes and intervention methods, particularly with respect to the Palestine-Israel conflict which provides the context to this study.

2.2 Seeing the other as human: ‘Otherness of the other’

Otherness as a phenomenological concept stems from the work of Emmanuel Levinas (1979) and the question of coexisting with others while recognising the ‘otherness of the other’ and keeping it intact (i.e. ‘I cannot reduce you to my worldview’). As a radical phenomenological critique, Levinas drew upon his own history to construct his notion of ‘the other’. Himself, a Lithuanian Jew, Levinas experienced the holocaust as a prisoner of war, and as a survivor chronicled his experience of the Stammlager camp. According to Levinas, to be human was to be responsible for the other, as the self cannot exist without its relation to the other (Mkhwanazi, 2013).

Meanwhile, Levinas (1979) spoke in dramatic terms, believing that to truly account for ‘otherness’, the other had to be absolute: an absolute difference, infinitely unique from oneself. To approach otherness by relating the other to our worldview does not preserve its otherness but reduces otherness to sameness. As the other is fundamentally unknowable, ontology should be removed from the place of philosophy (thought not completely) and replaced with ethics. In his view, we cannot understand the other whilst preserving its otherness; therefore, relating to the other is what should be

focused on— relating in an ethical manner (Levinas, 1979; Todd, 2012). As such, a moral obligation arises in the face-to-face encounter with the other. As the face of the other calls out ‘do me no harm’, suffering for the other is how Levinas believed we should respond to the ethical call to preserve the ‘otherness of the other’.

In the context of this study, we divert from such dramatic terms of suffering, but rather understand otherness as unique and infinite. If we understand otherness from this perspective, fundamental unknowability must follow; we must respect it, and therefore not manipulate it to our own needs. This relates directly to how individuals may (to an extent) learn to understand the other, and despite uncertainty and unknowability, learn to respect the other as they are, as human, just as they are. Meanwhile, the therapeutic environment may also be perceived as a response to the call of the client for the therapist to symbolically ‘suffer’ for them— to know they are not alone. As such, we may also arrive at otherness by building on common ground, and primarily through the development of empathy and perspective-taking. In the context of this study, the importance of these concepts is explored in relation to the development of otherness and how participants may learn to ‘give the other a more human face’.

2.2.1 The development of otherness: Empathy and perspective-taking

Research on empathy has developed tremendously over the past 50 years, with research now demonstrating the vast and influential impact of empathy on self-care and interpersonal functioning (Skovholt et al., 2001; Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2014; Sanchez-Reilly et al., 2013; Figley, 2002). Thus, the aim of this section is to explore non-systematically—definitions of empathy, followed by a brief review of empathy interventions. Through this, we can understand how can individuals and groups may learn and feel empathy towards one another.

“Empathy is really the opposite of spiritual meanness. It's the capacity to understand that every war is both won and lost. And that someone else's pain is as meaningful as your own.” – Barbara Kingsolver (cited in Aluisy, 2016: p.49)

To provide an adequate academic definition of empathy, one must not only describe, but also consider the diverse forms, functions and uses that apply; here the field

of psychotherapy presents itself with a challenge due to lacking a consensual definition and full understanding of how empathy operates (Aragno, 2008; Elliot et al., 2011; Moore, 1990). Nevertheless, we may all agree: empathy is an essential human faculty that enables us to feel “as if one were the other person” (Rogers, 1959: p.210; von Harbou, 2013). Furthermore, empathy is demonstrated by a courage, compassion and connection to “feel (perceive) the feelings (emotions) of other people” (Sawyer, 1975 cited in Duan & Hill, 1996: p.262). As such, psychoanalytic theorists, psychologists and researchers tend to define empathy as a trait or as an ability, which leads to an implicit assumption that some may be more empathic than others, either through development or innate nature (Duan & Hill, 1996). Consequently, the above definitions (amongst the several that exist in the literature) will be utilised in this study to conceptualise empathy and its development.

To illustrate further, leading scholar and author on vulnerability and shame, Brené Brown emphasises the distinctive importance of empathy in fuelling connection (Brown, 2006). Therefore, empathy where employed, acts as a binding agent within intimate relationships, allowing individuals to be seen, heard and understood. Being empathic calls for the individual to set aside his own thoughts and feelings, and attend to the intersubjective experience – to be outside of oneself and enter another’s frame of reference (Burnard, 1988; Rogers, 1957, 1975). Intersubjectivity itself adopts “some notion of motivation to understand another’s meaning system from his/her frame of reference”, and therefore acts as the relational frame from which empathy may be derived (Jordan, 1986: p.2). The overall effect is of one “crawling inside another person’s skin”, and recognising their perspective as their truth (Carkhuff, 1973: p.58). Furthermore, the role of perspective taking in empathy is brought into focus in Roger’s definition of empathy:

“The therapist’s sensitive ability and willingness to understand the client’s thoughts, feelings and struggles from the client’s point of view...this ability to see completely through the client’s eyes, to adopt his frame of reference.” (1980: p. 85)

By this definition, empathy is understood as a category of diverse subtypes, that include the many ways we may experience and consider the perspective, feelings and intentions of another– emotionally, cognitively, moments of meeting at relational depth or

simply a way of imaging what it is like to be the other person (Elliot et al., 2011; Hoever et al., 2012). Similarly, empathy may be expressed in different ways, including verbal communication: empathic listening and reflecting, withholding judgement, expressing curiosity, challenging prejudice - or in action: empathy through touch, mirroring expressions, and offering help or support (Kohut, 2010; Besel & Yuille, 2010). Similarly, Wiseman's (1996: p.1165) prominent literary review built a concept analysis of the four essential attributes of empathy:

1. **'See the world as others see it'**— demands putting your own subjectivity aside to see the situation through another's eyes.
2. **'Non-judgemental'**— judgment of another's experiences negates understanding and serves to protect the individual from the discomfort of situations.
3. **'Understanding another's feelings'**— to do so we must be in touch with our own and be able to set this aside to clearly understand the others' feelings
4. **'Communicate the understanding'**— through empathic statements, such as "I've been there too", or "that sounds very difficult, thank you for telling me".

With this understanding, empathy is simply more than a way of stepping into the shoes of the other; empathy is a distinctive and complex way of being in the world, a "mode of consciousness, different from perception, recollection and fantasy, that permits us to understand others" and strengthen the intimate bonds through which trust may be built (Zahavi, 2007: p.36; LaBaron & Carstarphen, 1997). Trust itself is nurtured through a continued, mutual commitment to listen to and respect the perspective of another; as individuals learn to see the world from the perspective of the other, the motivation to adapt their own perspective and resulting behaviour is likely to achieve a mutual recognition of humanness through which "right relationships" may be achieved (Augsburger, 1992: p.281)

Largely, the concept of empathy has endured a turbulent history within the field of traditional psychotherapy. Today, its foundational importance within counselling practice is rarely questioned since its popularisation by Carl Rogers and colleagues between the 1950-70s. However, claims relating to the universal effectiveness of empathy on therapeutic outcomes were intensely criticised through empirical investigations between

the 1970s and 1990s, criticising them for overestimating its overall effect (Duan and Hill, 1996; Barkham, 1988).

However, since early criticism of the literature, empathy has once again become the centre of scientific interest amongst social psychologists, including Gordon Allport, developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, and most notably among theoretical forerunners of psychotherapy, Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers (Gladstein, 1984; Wisp, 1987). Contrary to popular belief, the importance of empathy within psychotherapy did not originate with Rogers, despite his work marking a historic turning point on the question. Originating from Bordin's theme of the 'therapeutic working alliance', the centrality of empathy within the therapeutic relationship was first identified in the field of psychoanalytic psychotherapy (1979). Similarly, Freud (1921, cited in Aragno, 2008) contextualised empathy as an important therapeutic tool for analytic listening, as opposed to Roger's (1957) approach to empathy as one of the necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. The focus on the therapeutic relationship as the tool for a corrective emotional experience was also encouraged by Adler, whose ability to relate to his clients through active listening, empathy, and the communication of respect, may have been influential to Roger's own definition of empathy (Watts & Pietrzak, 2000; Carlson & Sperry, 2006). While these early investigations provide a useful background on empathy research, this part of the review aims to explore through the current literature— how empathy influences the way we can relate to others. This forms part of the main question to be answered in this review: how can individuals and groups learn and feel empathy towards each other?

Overwhelming literature on empathy development appear to point to studies associated with learning or training interventions (Hein et al., 2016; Becker & Zarit, 1978; O'Leary et al., 1998; Long et al., 1999; Shapiro et al., 2004; La Monica et al., 1987). These include a variety of empathy training courses delivering empathy skills, literature courses, drama training (i.e. 'how to act in-role', Lim et al., 2011; Fraser & Vitro, 1975), or resilience training with the aims of developing empathy and interpersonal skills (Feddes et al, 2015). On average, training courses are delivered between five and ten weeks, however there is no significant evidence to suggest that length of training has an impact on empathy outcomes in this review, and can be corroborated by previous meta-analyses conducted on randomized control trials of empathy training (Teding van

Berkhout & Malouff, 2016). Overall, the training courses/classes appear to produce the most consistent findings for moderate or highly statistically significant outcomes in feelings of empathy for others and empathy skills development. Other literature suggests a range of intervention programmes aimed at raising awareness of and encouraging feelings of empathy through forgiveness interventions, learning interventions, video [game] based interventions/workshops (i.e. Holm, 2002; O'Donohue et al., 2003), and communication [dialogue] interventions (i.e. Fernández-Olano et al., 2008; Bonvicini et al., 2009). Nevertheless, some examples in the literature show inconsistent empirical evidence for empathy learning and development, with two studies demonstrating that empathy training did not result in statistically significant changes in empathy, and one study showing a marginal increase in feelings of empathy (i.e. Feddes et al., 2015; Ji et al., 2016). However, these studies do not share common features as to identify specific causes for these effects, with much of the interventions identified in the literature demonstrating successful behavioural outcomes.

Synthesising the extant literature on empathy and development, this review has identified key papers which describe valuable information regarding learning, feeling and development of empathy. Overall, methods adopt an educational method, whereby raising an awareness of helpful behaviours and actively engaging participants in those behaviours are more likely to encourage empathic feelings, and a development in empathy skills. These skills are particularly important in the context of not only intimate relationships, but those in professional or novel contexts in which an ability to be empathic is crucial for effective interpersonal communication. It is evident that an intervention or training method has the potential to be successful if it embodies within its theoretical framework—satisfactory elements which promote the development of empathic feelings and expression. These elements are outlined below:

- i. Raising awareness of empathy and what this means
- ii. Empathy measures that engage participants in understanding, acting and feeling as if they were in the shoes of another person
- iii. Measures are provided on a regular basis or part of a limited course; though not statistically proven to impact on behavioural outcomes, are in general, successfully delivered as part of an educational course, intervention or workshop

- iv. Measures might include: role-play exercises, discussing case vignettes of individuals' unique lived experiences, educational videos, group cohesion and bonding activities, experiential groups, taught courses on essential behavioural tasks and skills.

Overall, this section has attempted to provide a summary of the literature in relation to the definition of empathy. From this point, empathy will be described in this study as an epistemological notion, a way of arriving at a knowing of another's way of being in the world, of understanding their pains and joys as one's own, and potentially initiate a more dynamic and gentler process of interaction with the other.

2.3 Relation to Counselling Psychology

The relationship between conflict research and counselling psychology is not immediately apparent when viewed in the context of culture and ethnicity. However, theory demonstrates how core principles of counselling practice such as empathy, non-judgment and perspective taking can be taken from the therapeutic environment and successfully applied to the context of cultural conflict – in the form of intergroup encounters or interventions (*see* section: 2.3.2). Principles of therapeutic practice can also be applied from counselling psychology guidelines on conflict and ethical conduct to understand conflict situations, including respect, empathy, competence, responsibility and integrity (The British Psychological Society, 2009). It is necessary to highlight the applicability of these core principles to conflict situations to demonstrate their emphasis on establishing and developing relationships through empathy and perspective taking. Furthermore, by engaging in empathic responding this may foster greater reflexivity and understanding, thereby enhancing interpersonal functioning in individuals (Block-Lerner et al., 2007).

The following section moves onto describe in greater detail the beneficial function of core counselling principles and the contribution of the discipline towards helping foster more positive group processes in conflict situations.

2.3.1 The practice of counselling principles

Ethics and Professional Practice: the link with socio-cultural issues

Counselling psychology is uniquely placed to address the gap in conflict research through its philosophical underpinning and how this can facilitate working effectively with issues of difference and diversity. By way of illustration, Moodley (2009) discusses the role of psychotherapy in the context of social and cultural discourse, and its role in recognising the culturally embedded narratives that are so central to the lives of socio-cultural groups, whom are often marginalised and silenced in society. Not only this, members of all socio-cultural groups come with their own value-laden assumptions with which they interpret the world and dictate their social interactions. These culturally embedded narratives, or ways of being, are inexplicably linked to social perception and cannot be said to lack importance within counselling and psychotherapy (Lago, 2005; 2011). Nonetheless, these disciplines have been accused of emphasising culturally homogenous discourse of cultural difference, while ignoring questions of individual difference within these contexts, such as discrimination and oppression (Moodley, 2007).

Within counselling and psychotherapy, professionals are now continually challenged to reflect on the impact of their own values and beliefs as it relates to culture and being culturally responsive practitioners, especially as they navigate the subtle biases and conflicts in traditional models of training that may not promote culturally responsive practice. Known as reflexive and critical reflection, courses increasingly encourage trainees to consider the ethical implications of their practice by challenging the heteronormative assumptions inherent within therapeutic models and approaches (Moon, 2016; Etherington, 2007; Falicov, 1995). In doing so, practitioners should be able to reconsider their own perceptions; as exemplified through Moon's (2011) research, '*The Gentle Violence of Therapists: Misrecognition and Dislocation of the Other*', if practitioners fail to move away from heteronormative assumptions of social life (e.g. sexuality, gender, and race), they are at risk of perpetuating a "type of gentle violence" that may impact on the social, cultural, and emotional identity of individuals in society (p.194).

While Moon's (2011) research may conceptualise difference in the context of sexuality and gender, her research acknowledges intersectionality across other socially constructed categories (e.g. ethnicity, race and class), and how these are also impacted by

subtly ‘violent’ practices. These critical perspectives demonstrate how counselling and psychotherapy are irreversibly positioned within the socio-cultural narrative of society, and as such, are unable to detangle themselves from questions of difference. Furthermore, the disciplines play an important role in promoting a pluralistic and reflexive approach towards socio-cultural issues, such as discrimination, oppression, and bias, and thus working towards making relationships culturally inclusive – a factor that is vital to the context of this research.

The application of core counselling principles

The value of empathy and compassion motivated by the ethical concerns for justice irrespective of measurable outcomes– is echoed throughout counselling psychology practice guidelines. These principles relate closely to the concerns of this research in the context of cultural conflict, and how ethical principles inform our knowledge of how to manage issues in relation to conflict that can arise out of discrimination, inequality, and bias. The ethical concern to treat people with respect and without discrimination is paramount throughout societies, and is stringently observed within the counselling and psychotherapeutic communities. The aims of these ethical standards are to promote the values that are essential in developing cohesive and collaborative relationships in communities whilst embracing diversity. Meanwhile ethical standards also highlight the importance of competent practice so that practitioners remain steadfast in their duty towards maintaining the clients’ autonomy and wellbeing (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008; Tyson, 2011; Tribe & Morrissey, 2015).

Commitment and respect to clients is central to the profession and is maintained as the BACP’s six key commitments to the client within their ethical framework for counselling professions (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2016); including respect for the client’s uniqueness, working in partnership, and working ethically in careful consideration of the law, BACP’s (2016) ethical and professional standards help inform not only competent practice, but also how to deal with conflict situations and ethical dilemmas that may arise from the work. Though BACP and the previously noted ethical guidelines do not directly address issues of interpersonal or social conflict, they do indeed emphasise the practitioners’ responsibility to use their professional judgement, make use of ethical problem solving models and above all, aspire

to key personal qualities of care, diligence, integrity, humility, empathy and respect—qualities that are applicable to issues raised through social conflict and the effective means of addressing them (BACP, 2016: p.3).

The personal qualities outlined above are essential ways in which the management of social conflict can be addressed between individuals as well as respective parties involved. By inviting and engaging individuals under organised contexts, such as those within the therapeutic setting (i.e. experiential groups and group counselling), they can be encouraged to engage in a process of listening, understanding and empathic dialogue. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by humanist and developer of the person-centred theory, Carl Rogers, who underlined the importance of encouraging individuals to realise and value their own uniqueness and potential by reflecting on their personal experiences in the warmth and security of the therapeutic relationship (Greene, 1999). Through the encounter, the individual learns to value his or herself, and become more receptive and considerate of another's experience in relation to their own (Rogers, 1957; 1959; 1961). Therefore, interventions like this that promote empathy and understanding can help facilitate a progression to the following: though 'I' am feeling hurt by the other person, 'they' too are also feeling hurt by me. This is an essential practice by which each respective side in a conflict situation can give recognition to the other and work towards an enduring co-existence relationship, irrespective of cultural or religious difference.

Respect and integrity are also applicable here, as the benefits of this are explained by Piaget who introduced 'perspective-taking' to illustrate the growing importance of shifting attention from one's own world-view to consider and respect the perspective of another (1967 in Ackermann, 1996). The 'three mountain's task' illustrated this by confronting 4 to 11 year olds with a scale model that represented the three mountains and asked them to describe the various perspectives for which a doll would be able to view them (Piaget & Inhelder, 1971). It is only at the later stages (ages 8-11) that children understood that the view of the mountains changed depending on the observer's position to them. Piaget concluded that as we develop, the ability to make a distinction between one's own perspective and another encourages a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the world (Ackerman, 1996). Meanwhile, providing a useful summary of this literature, Bartunek et al., (1983) propose that in the development of perspective taking, individuals "become increasingly able to empathize with others who hold conflicting views", thus demonstrating an increased ability to take the perspective of

others (p.274). This summary can be similarly applied to the complexities of protracted, conflict situations and the likelihood of encouraging individuals to grasp and understand the world-view of another, however complex and far reaching it may first seem. Furthermore, the concept of perspective taking relates closely to ethical and professional competencies framework, which are to encourage practitioners to show empathic responding, respect, and acknowledgement of the views and subjective experiences of clients (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2016; British Psychological Society, 2005). This can be subsequently applied to the management of conflict situations, by encouraging individuals to be respectful, understanding, considerate of alternative perspectives, and thus help to minimise the negative reactions that can lead to conflict behaviour.

2.3.2 Theory and method of group intervention in conflict management

There are diverse theoretical approaches and models to understanding how group processes work and how these contribute to behavioural change. These are largely dependent on the theoretical orientation of the practitioner or leader and their therapeutic agenda (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005; Corey, 2016). Some leaders prefer to emphasise personal insight, encouraging participants to identify feelings by engaging in free expression in accordance with psychoanalytic thinking (Stone & Rutan, 2007; Rutan et al., 2014). Other leaders while emphasising on feelings and subjective experience, encourage the use of the group as a meaningful encounter for exploration and validation (Cooper et al., 2013; Schmid, 2001). Meanwhile there are leaders whose emphasis is on considering new ideas and practicing new behaviours within the group to encourage desired behavioural changes (Molassiotis et al., 2002). Others however, while encouraging the expression of feelings and ideas, highlight the importance of examining beliefs and considering more positive ways of viewing themselves and others (Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Arch & Craske, 2008). These examples represent some of the most prevalent theoretical orientations, and the therapeutic agendas that operate to enhance collective change in groups.

Some of the most prevalent theoretical literature and guidelines on group work are provided by the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA), who have contributed significantly to the growth and development in the field of group psychotherapy, and in 2007 developed a set of ten key guidelines intended to serve as a

helpful and flexible practice resource. Adopting a model of therapeutic groups as “an agent for change”, the AGPA guidelines draw attention to what they believe are three active processes in the group setting that the group leader must integrate: ‘individual dynamics, interpersonal dynamics, and group as a whole dynamics’ (2007: p.3). To integrate these features successfully, the leader is advised to be mindful of aspects of individual difference (i.e. client population, stages of development) that will influence the appropriateness of interventions during group work. As a result, the contribution of the group leader in this process cannot be underestimated. Virtually any behaviour displayed by the group leader can be interpreted as use of a technique for creating movement in the group’s behaviour (Corey et al., 2013). The use of techniques might range from offering insight or feedback for members to discuss to assigning homework tasks to be completed between sessions. Therefore, any behaviours explicitly or implicitly communicated by the group leader will be interpreted by individual members and may contribute to group outcomes (Dies, 1994; Burlingame et al., 1994).

Largely, the AGPA have contributed to resources for clients seeking support with anxiety, depression and trauma, helping them to identify ways in which their interpersonal functioning and self-esteem may be helped by the *curative* aid of group process (MacKenzie et al., 1987; Stone et al., 1994). One guideline underlined, “understanding mechanism of action in group psychotherapy”, recognises that the health of individual members is intrinsically associated with the functioning of the group as-a-whole (AGPA, 2007: p.12). The existence of a specific set of factors that contribute successfully to group functioning have been the subject of complex and contradictory research in the field. While some argue that each group is unique in the way that it functions to promote change, others believe in the benefit of practice guidelines that can be used to augment clinical judgement in group work, rather than dictating unique underlying group processes (Bloch et al., 1979; Kivlighan & Goldfine, 1991; MacKenzie, 1987; Leszcz & Kobos, 2008; Burlingame & Beecher, 2008).

While it is helpful to highlight the theory and rationale behind group intervention methods in counselling and psychotherapy, the aim of the following section is to consider the helpfulness of these factors in the context of conflict research, whereas yet there is a significant gap in the literature. Remarkably, the concept of *conflict resolution therapy* is recognised in currently limited form as a therapeutic intervention for

couples or families, with its aim to teach individuals interpersonal conflict resolution skills (Heitler, 2007; Jacobson & Christensen, 1996; Minuchin, 1965). However, assertions that the approach may be applied to address conflict in any situation lack empirical evidence and historical research to support, therefore limiting the validity and reliability of its claims (Heitler, 2007). Similarly, the efficacy and usefulness of Gestalt therapy as an alternative form of mediation is hampered by a lack of supporting research in the context of groups despite providing an insightful and creative framework for resolving interpersonal conflict (Metzger and & IUR, 2008). Therefore, the following section addresses some of the literature in this field that may help contribute to an understanding of the essential intergroup factors for successful conflict resolution.

2.3.2.1 Methods of group intervention

Some of the most notable efforts in the area conflict resolution have been led by Herbert Kelman's problem-solving workshops (1972, 1990, 1997, 1999). Principally a socio-psychological approach, the workshops aim to encourage a 'peace process' by affecting changes in relations between influential individuals (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994). In addition, the contribution of a third party as group facilitators and mediators are highlighted as an influential factor in promoting constructive change between groups in conflict (Fisher, 1983; Hill, 1982). Whether these consist of a third-party organisation arranging an interactive workshop, educational programme, or the development of a computer based programme, it is evident that the independent third-party figure is integral at the stage of helping individuals establish a foundation of trust that will allow them to begin the process of exploring new relationships with others (Kelman, 2005; Halevy & Halali, 2015). Without third party intervention, the chances of effective communication and interaction between groups in conflict appear fraught with difficulty and little chance of working towards reconciliation. The following summarises the promising behavioural outcomes for groups who have participated in a third-party intervention workshop or programme than any other method, demonstrating their overall effectiveness in conflict management (Ron & Maoz, 2013; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017; Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Hill, 1982; Bilali et al., 2016; Pearson d'Estrée & Babbitt, 1998):

- i. Improvement in participants' behaviour with one another and of increased empathy and acknowledgment of the other's concerns.

- ii. Increased ability to take the perspective of the other person and understand their world view
- iii. Develop greater awareness of the self and the other, therefore encouraging mutual education around the nature of the conflict
- iv. Increase willingness and openness to finding solutions
- v. Increased cooperativeness, tolerance, intergroup trust and self-disclosure

Meanwhile, the past two decades have seen a proliferation of techniques and methods for conflict resolution. However, effective group process demands a creative spirit that is fostered through the development of cohesive relationships based in understanding, respect, and ideally, in trust (Burlingame et al., 2002; 2011; Marziali et al., 1997). Although this can take considerable time to develop, and fraught with complex layers of narrative in the context of protracted cultural conflict, third party approaches to conflict resolution pioneered by John Burton (1969, 1972, 1979, 1992) and further developed by Kelman in his *interactive problem solving* workshops, have suggested a means of fostering constructive peace building (1997).

In an insightful review article, Hill (1982: p. 127), explores the requirements identified by Kelman as maximising the impact of group participation:

- i. **Goals:** workshops should be used to address a variety of goals that complement the needs and nature of individual conflict
- ii. **Participants:** should ideally be unofficial but politically influential participants.
- iii. **Setting:** a novel environment will encourage cooperation and counteract conflict behavior
- iv. **Interaction focus:** the need to balance interpersonal with intergroup activity as foci for increased interaction
- v. **Tone:** seriousness with a certain degree of playfulness to achieve creative and integrative solutions
- vi. **Interventions:** should involve both intellectual and emotional dimensions and carefully prepared

One criticism of these factors is the ideal prerequisite that participants should be ‘politically influential’. The research gathered in this review demonstrates the contrary,

showing highly significant and positive impacts of problem solving [dialogue] workshops on participants who are individual lay-members of communities in conflict (Fisher, 1980; Kellen et al., 2013; Mollov et al., 2004). Nevertheless, Kelman (2005) ascertains that the benefits inherent within his approach are relevant and applicable to trust building in broader conflict processes. These include: the role of the third party as a figure of trust within the early stages; the cautious view of relationship building as an ‘uneasy coalition’ when made across conflict lines; and the development of a mutual reassurance based on responsiveness and reciprocity. Overall, these concepts provide a common framework for building trust in reconciliation, that is modest and cautious of the reality among parties in protracted conflict.

It is evident that intervention methods for cultural conflict have the potential to be successful if they embody within their theoretical framework—essential characteristics that promote social inclusion, respect, trust and mutual understanding (Fisher, 1980; Ron & Maoz, 2013; Mollov et al., 2004; Desivilya, 2004; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017; Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Cross & Rosenthal, 1999). While these describe helpful factors in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they also provide an essential framework for understanding broader conflict situations and the ways they can promote a common desire for peace and create fewer uneasy “coalitions across conflict lines” (Kelman, 1993: p. 236). As a result, the literature coincides with the aims of this study and the need in the field of both counselling and conflict research to identify the wider implications of helpful factors in group interventions.

2.3.3 The Process of Behavioural Change

Roger's "necessary and sufficient conditions" for therapeutic personality change provide a foundation for understanding the aims of this study and participants potential process of change (Rogers, 1989: p.219). According to Rogers (1957), the therapeutic transition is dependent on three core conditions which, 'if' can be created, 'then' psychological development and growth can occur:

- i. **Empathy:** an ability to experience the world as the other experiences it; empathy arises from an understanding and appreciation of the 'others' world, not solely from one's own frame of reference, but their own. Most importantly, empathy is a process that is in constant movement, requiring sensitivity and awareness.
- ii. **Unconditional Positive Regard:** an attitude of valuing, prizing, respect, warmth and openness to the other; attempt at non-judgmental valuing of a person behind unacceptable behaviours and attributes, while maintaining respect and compassion for their humanity are essential elements of positive regard.
- iii. **Congruence:** comprises self-awareness, transparency with the other, and an attitude of authenticity and wholeness.

Each condition should be considered interdependent qualities, requiring the sustained presence of the other to be of any benefit in the relationship between self and other, and therefore towards the development of therapeutic (personality) change.

Described by Rogers as a "change in the personality structure of the individual, at both surface and deeper levels", the process of change indicates a development in the way the individual relates to themselves and others (Rogers, 1989: p.220; Rogers & Dymond, 1954). Furthermore, characterised by less internal conflict, the individual is equipped with greater capacity to be open to experience without feeling threatened and therefore able to listen to themselves and the experiences of others, without judgment and with greater empathy and understanding (Rogers, 1961; 1975). What is more, Rogers describes the practice of the core conditions as transcendent and transformative in behavioural change:

“It seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present” (1980: p.129).

The aims of this study are primarily centered on Rogers key foundational principles of practice and the core conditions which are said to be sufficient in nurturing and supporting behavioural change. Therefore, the ways in which the therapeutic frame may support individuals to move through a process of change, similarly, the group process of the seminars aims to facilitate a growing openness to experience, allowing participants to move from a self that is fixed and static, to a self that is flowing and open to experiencing reality as it is (Rogers, 1957; 1959).

While group processes are a complex phenomenon, there is evidence to suggest that various characteristics of group relations, based on basic bonds of connectedness, acceptance and support contribute to statistically significant outcomes on behavioural change (Marziali et al., 1997; Johnston, 1995; Budman et al., 1989; Hogg, 1993). In addition, Burlingame, MacKenzie and Strauss (2004) identified several aspects that govern an effective group intervention, specifically, structural factors such as timing, the nature of the therapeutic environment and use of interpersonal feedback. Similarly, Yalom & Leszcz (2005) studying helpful therapeutic factors in group therapy, identified twelve key factors involved in behaviour change— catharsis and identification [with others] amongst the most highly ranked for group clients. Group interventions that prioritise these factors are understood to contribute to genuine and enduring therapeutic change. These key factors though present in much of the current literature in counselling and psychotherapy, do not appear to be prominent in the study of cultural conflict. As a result, there is a growing need to move beyond traditional conflict methods of diplomacy, to interpersonal, psychological approaches that emphasise long-term objectives and the healing of relationships between members of society (Lederach, 1997).

2.4 The Meaning of Conflict

Conflict research is historically located within the socio-cultural tradition, particularly the social constructivist approach, which views reality as inter-subjective, and co-constructed through language (Ochs, 1993; Jacoby & Ochs, 1995; Felix, 2005; Confrey, 1995). As a result, conflict is not easily defined, with definitions largely referred to in vague and multiple perceptive terms (Schmidt and Kochan, 1972). Attempts at a reliable and accurate conceptualisation of its meaning and development therefore before difficult to define beyond the social-construction of language. Nonetheless, it is vital to offer a conceptualisation that is meaningful and relevant to the context of this study. Thomas (1992) offers a broad definition which defines conflict as “the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his” (p.265). Similarly, Rubin, Pruitt & Kim define conflict as a “divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties’ current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously” (1994: p.5). Meanwhile, Mayer (2000) classifies perception as a fundamental component of conflict describing it as “a real or perceived incompatibility of interests, inconsistent worldviews, or a set of behaviours” (p. 3). As a result, conflict can be understood as a ‘psycho-social process’ in which intergroup relations and interactions are shaped by cultural and subjective meanings (Ting-Toomey, 1985; Lambourne, 2000; Augsburger, 1992). From this perspective, conflict is the unique result of recognising “the existence of multiple realities” and the tensions of negotiating “the creation of a common meaning” in the world (Lederach, 1988: p.39). As such, conflict is intrinsically embedded within the subjective experience of people and the meaning making process that binds them to their environment.

Using this definition as starting point, we understand that if goal orientation motivates behaviour, then members of conflicting groups will be motivated to behave in a way that is inconsistent with those of the other (Bar-Tal, Kruglanski, & Klar, 1989; Bar-Tel et al., 2012; Fisher, 2012). However, while goal incompatibility may motivate conflict, it does not account for a group’s initiation and engagement in overt retaliation (Walker, 1970). Furthermore, not all conflicts of interest result in overt behaviour. Nevertheless, according to Boulding (1963: p.5) conflict may arise in a “situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future

positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other.”

Conflict is likely to arise when the group finds its interests explicitly thwarted or blocked by the goals of the other group. While this is a common and unavoidable feature of intergroup life, there are several prominent examples (later described) where conflict may become hostile and intractable. As such, the topic of conflict inevitably expands beyond conventional categories when understood in the context of group culture.

2.4.1 Understanding cultural conflict

As previous literature searches have shown, we are presented with the difficulties in achieving a unitary conceptualisation of conflict. Emerging from this, we may accomplish a clearer understanding of conflict types by outlining key ideas within the context of group culture – which is particularly helpful considering the premise and aims of this study.

Otherwise known as ‘intergroup’ or ‘social’ conflict, the ideas that one’s collective goals or values are contradicted by the outgroup and are unlikely to be achieved is likely to provoke a perception of threat and initiate retaliation (Oberschall, 1978; Bar-Tal, 1990). Identity and security are among the most basic goals for groups, and conflict may therefore be incurred as a result. Arguably, Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) social identity theory alone interprets the division of people into groups as an antecedent of conflict, despite several successful examples in which multi-ethnic groups peacefully co-exist (i.e. tribes of Africa, ethnic groups of former SFR Yugoslavia and Kazakhstan, and the numerous religious groups of Kerala, India). Nevertheless, co-existence is likely to be threatened if groups perceive the outgroup as a threat to their identity and way of life (Worchel, 2005; Austin & Worchel, 1986). Similarly, Fiske (2002) identifies the subtle biases inherent in the discrimination of out-groups: “Comfort with one’s own in-group, plus exclusion and avoidance of out-groups. Such biases result from internal conflict between cultural ideals and cultural biases”; Meanwhile, blatant biases “are more conscious, hot, direct, and unambiguous,” and “result from perceived intergroup conflict over economics and values, in a world perceived to be hierarchical and dangerous” (p. 123). Overall, these views place emphasis on the role of emotion in cultural conflict and

is supported further in the context of this study (Hammer, 2005; Bodtker and Katz Jameson, 2001; Peterson, 2011).

2.4.2 The Role of Emotion and Cognition in Cultural Conflict

The role of culture in emphasising the in-group and out-group bias is evidently a major underlying force in the phenomena of conflict. Cultures encompass language, dress, customs and beliefs, all of which define the collectivist identity and reinforce members' participation and protection of that identity (Jetten et al., 2002; Brown et al., 1992; Brewer & Chen, 2007). Believed to reflect an inherently cognitive bias, cultural factors are often visible and contribute somewhat pervasively in the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination between groups, regardless of other identities and individual attributes (Fiske et al., 2010; Worchel, 2005; Dasgupta, 2004). Cognitive bias therefore increases accessibility to stereotypes and activate thoughts and behaviour that are consistent with the emotional prejudice of the outgroup, with several studies in increasing support of priming to stereotypes as an implicit operation as opposed to a controlled and conscious process (Nelson, 2009; Greenwald & Benaji, 1995; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000; Fiske, 2000).

Evidently, intent to thwart or competition for resources are necessary but not sufficient factors for the initiation of conflict, and culture's role in emphasising in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination, particularly in highly segregated and hierarchically organised societies, are likely to contribute to apartheid and set the stage for intergroup conflict (Brewer, 1999). With in-group cultural bias as a strong predictor of threat perception, maintaining group identity and security become imperative for the group who fear that the other is bent on destroying the collective way of life (Wildavsky & Dake, 1990); meanwhile, others suggest uncertainty avoidance as a significant predictor of out-group threat perception (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Riek et al., 2006; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010). However, Worchel (2005) suggests that fear is the common emotion that unites groups in conflict, and that a perceived threat posed by the other group to the group's identity and security will be sufficient to provoke conflict. As such, it is the 'perception' of threat (which may be real or imagined) rather than group identity itself that influences a greater likelihood of conflict initiation (Zarate et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2009; Worchel, 2005). Furthermore, Worchel (1999) highlights the role of

conflict in the maintenance of group identity through the emphasis of a distinct ‘us vs. them’, and the perception of the out-group as homogenous and threatening. As a result, negative perceptions of the outgroup are likely to be oversensitised and misinterpretations of the likelihood of threat more commonplace, leading to increased fear, hatred and more decisive retaliation (Bar-Tal, 2000). Ultimately, the escalation of fear between the self and the other (in-group and out-group) perpetuates the negative assumption of threat and evidently contributes to the intractability of intergroup conflict (Worchel, 2005).

2.5 The complex history of conflict

Cultural conflict or ethnic conflict as we will refer to in this study involve a broad and complex history between groups based on ideology, values, customs, religion, resources and power (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998; Eller, 1999; Chiro & Seligman, 2001; Stewart, 2016); and resulting in “prejudice, discrimination, injustice, perpetuation of inequality, oppression, ethnic cleansing, and genocide”, worldwide conflict poses a great threat to peaceful co-existence and the cohesion of states (Hewstone & Greenland, 2000: p.136). However, the global scope of conflict phenomena is no longer an international concern following events of post-cold war Europe and the rise in interstate ethno-cultural conflict. Groups have increasingly engaged in violence since the 1950s; most notably, the collapse of former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia (USSR), 1994 mass genocide in Rwanda, 1992 Bosnian war, ‘The Troubles’ nationalist conflict of Northern Ireland, and in the context of this study – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Campbell, 1998; Mays & Rosenzweig, 1998; Staub et al., 2005; McGarry & O’leary, 2013). These examples demonstrate what is continually at stake for ethnic-cultural groups in society: the perception that each of the groups’ own values, goals and interests are persistently thwarted and threatened by those of the other (Bar-Tal, 2000).

Historically, the sociological view attributes the root of historical conflicts to the struggle for domestic power and claims of entitlement, together fuelled by ethnic, religious, cultural and social rivalries (Huntington, 2000; Sherif, 2015). When it is believed that both sides will not agree, or further, that the political relationship is perceived as unequal, the first instance of dispute arises (Yilmaz, 2007). Later, more favourable structural changes for cultural rights and/or political separation may be sought, however conflict may arise when the tension is not effectively acknowledged or

addressed by the existing political order (Yilmaz, 2007). However, while the subsequent disintegration of communist ideology and collapse of the Soviet Union have played a significant role in the increase of cultural conflict, it is important to recognise that it is not exclusively due to the historical re-emergence of suppressed hostility or intergroup differences (Horowitz, 1985; Kaufman, 2001). Growing fears and distrust lead to distorted images one group has about the other, resulting in a divergence of religious, cultural and political values (Coleman, 2000).

This approach defines an alternative way of understanding conflict that transforms from a (macro-level) sociological perspective to a more (micro-level) psychological approach. Through this lens, post-Cold War conflict served to demonstrate the fundamental clash between culture and identity, and the group's collective fears for the future (Lake & Rothchild, 1996). Furthermore, they provide valuable insight into the changing image of cultural conflict; and with wars no longer waged on the battlefield away from the community; civilians are now believed to comprise approximately 80% of the casualties of war (Ashford & Huet-Vaughn, 2000; Garfield & Neugut, 1997). While some question the statistics as inaccurate and potentially reinforcing of a cynical approach to managing casualties of war, it is estimated that approximately 100 national and inter-state groups have been engaged in armed conflict between the years of 1945 and 1990 (Roberts, 2010; Holcomb et al., 2006). This statistic has increased rapidly to a reported 225 armed conflicts until 2001 and still rising (Gleditsch et al., 2002).

2.5.1 The Israeli-Palestinian case: a timeline of key events

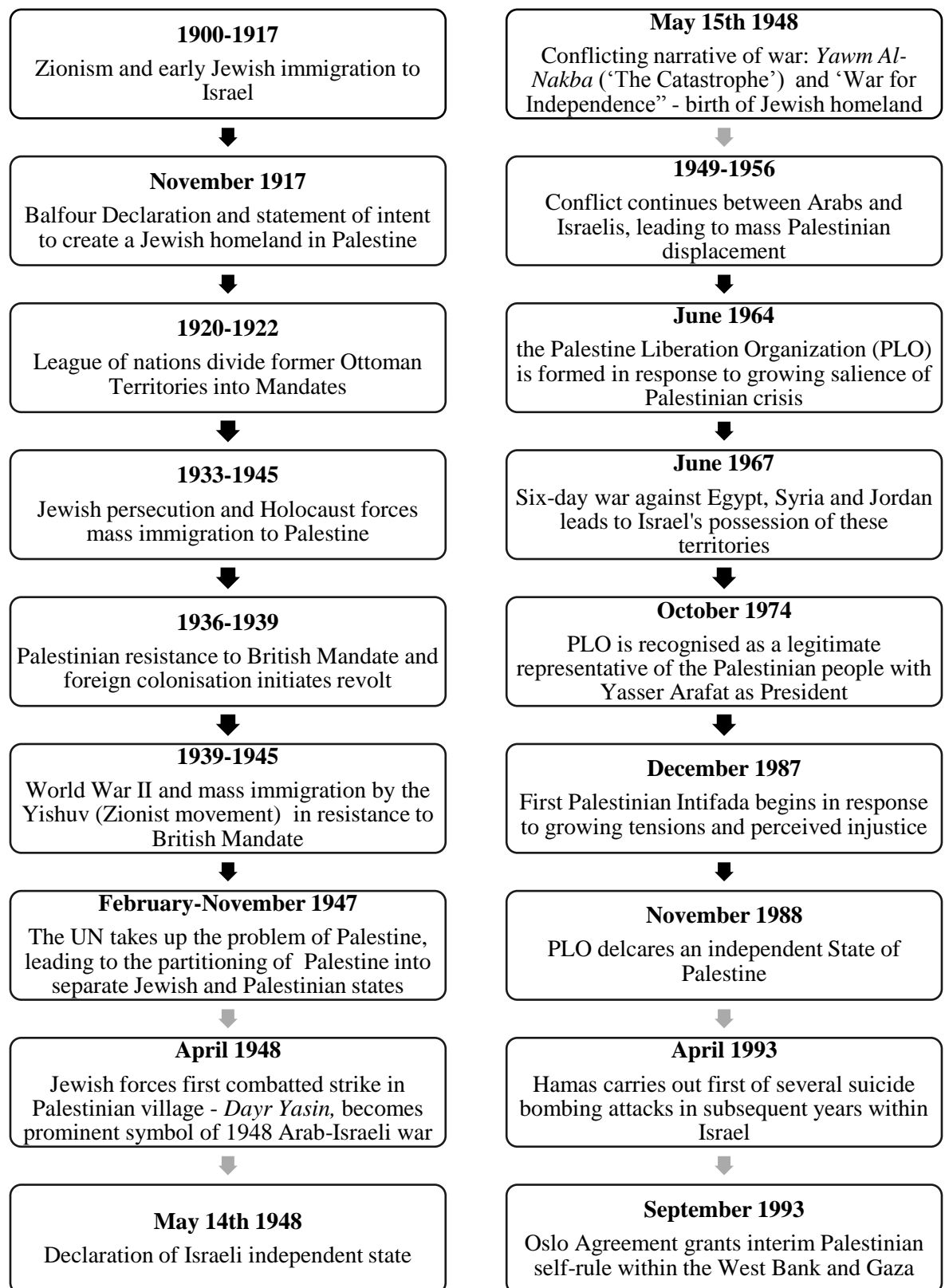
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deeply rooted in almost a century of uneven and protracted political force (Kelman, 1999). Protracted social conflict, or otherwise known as *intractable* conflict, generally refers to that which is complex, enduring, violent in nature, and “costly both in human and material terms” (Azar et al., 1978; Bar-Tal, 1990; Bar-Tal, 1998: p. 22). Complex by nature, these conflicts involve “the intersection and collision of a multiplicity of religious, cultural, and national identities”, each at odds with the other (Lewis, 1998, as cited in Hammack, 2006: p.330). By definition, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be viewed as a response to the existence of two dominant and resistant “ideological discourses (one Jewish, one Arab) on the control of the land and recognition of group sovereignty” (Hammack, 2006: p.330).

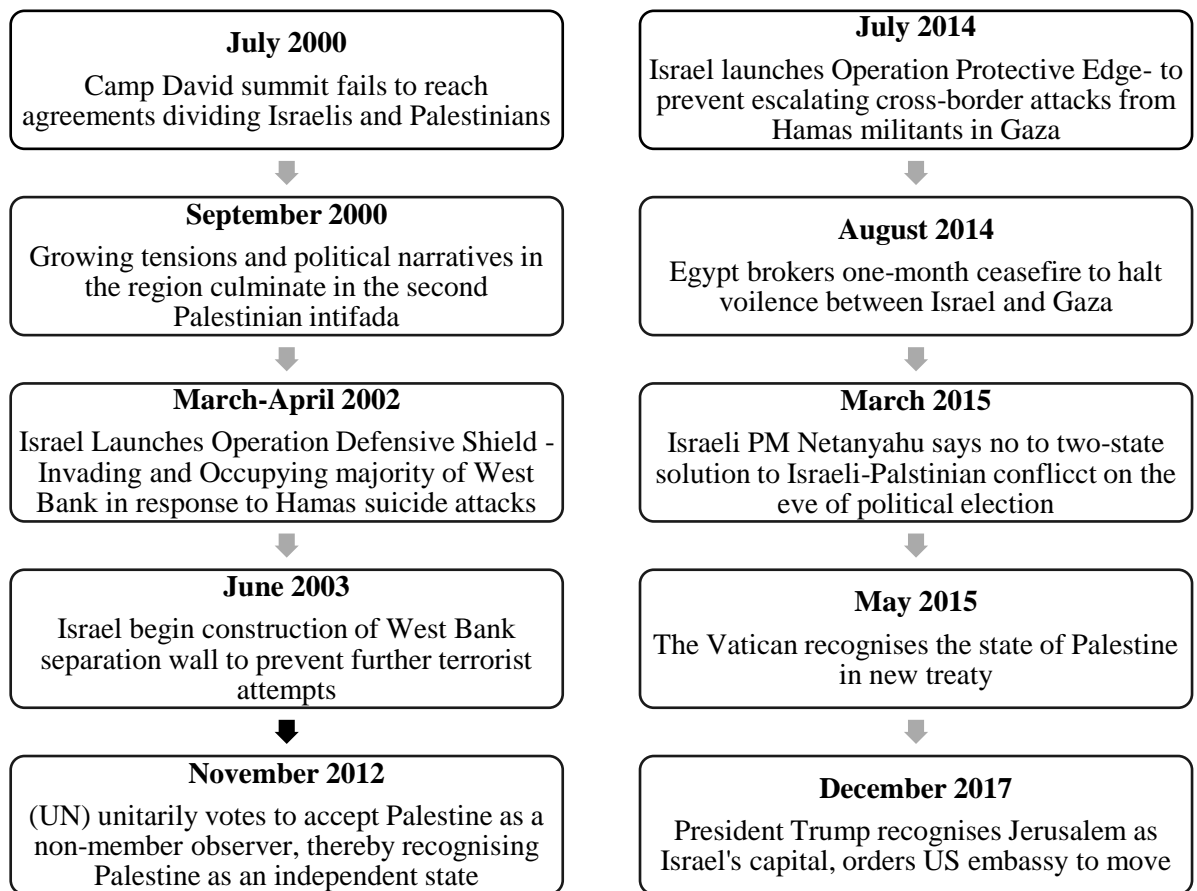
While each side has come to the conflict from a different point of view, the reality is far more complex. Each party sees the conflict not only from their point of view, but rather as ‘the truth’ itself (Fuchs, 1992, Bergman et al., 2010). However, Nietzsche’s papers on Philosophy and Truth playfully challenge notions of truth as “illusions we have forgotten are illusions”, and that there are no definitive facts, but “only interpretations” (1979, as cited in Clark, 1990: p. 2). This philosophical stance reveals the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian dichotomy, with each side bringing its own culture, religion and ideological position on the conflict. However, these competing ideologies, which in becoming a way of life have lost touch with any clear-cut objectives, demonstrate a unique and problematic issue at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

Key historical events prior to Israel’s 1948 declaration of independence helped situate the conflict in the larger global context we recognise today (Chapman, 2015). However, given an elaborate history that is predominant with conflicting claims of truth and interpretation, it proves challenging to present an account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is not entirely value-laden. The outcomes of this study alone will carry political and moral implications for the future of non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) and group intervention methods for conflict in the Middle East and internationally.

Therefore, the following table (below) presents an extensively sourced and faithful perspective on the principle historical timeline of events from the birth of political Zionism in the early 1900s; the humanitarian implications of The Holocaust that perpetuated a polarising historical discourse in the land—a pivotal turning point in the creation of the independent state of Israel in 1948; to Israel’s 2014 ‘Operation Protective Edge’ in Gaza and the resulting humanitarian crisis that followed (Joronen, 2016; Bickerton & Kalusner, 2007; Bar-Tal, 1990; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Hammack, 2006; Shenhav, 1999; Al-Salim, 2014; Cohen-Almagor, 2012; Bar-Tal & Sharvit, 2007; Cohen, 2006).

Table 1. Historical Timeline of Events in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict





Historical narratives in the region are far from objective, as Israelis and Palestinians each continue to transmit their own account of reality in the conflict (Shenhav, 2006; Pingel, 2008). Evidently, separation and marginalisation are intrinsically woven into the fabric of Israeli-Palestinian national identity, thereby maintaining the collective perception of the other as an enemy (Kelman, 1999; 2005). However, what is of most interest in this study are the ways in which group processes at the micro level of society, amongst communities, may change this perception. Can groups in conflict learn empathy, and might they be able to see the other not only as an enemy, but also as a fellow human being?

2.6 Communications in the Middle East (COME)

COME represents one example of an NGO fostering a climate of change between members of conflict groups in society. For over 40 years, the Dutch based foundation has provided a platform for Israelis and Palestinians to meet each other on neutral grounds and engage in open dialogue. By separating them from the context that reminds of their role as members of a conflict, COME are providing a unique opportunity (in comparison to other group interventions) for group members to perceive one another in a different way. As such, the meetings arranged by COME aim to facilitate a neutral space for the participants to engage in joint activity that may encourage the groups to initiate a process of humanizing the other as opposed to emphasizing collective fears, biases in belief and prejudice of the other group (COME, 2013). The process challenges individuals to self-reflect and to give each other ‘a human face’ by meeting each other in a variety of intergroup activity.

Within this context, Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) highlight the important of non-governmental organisations as the “change agents” that can encourage innovative change within these communities (p.999). Also, whilst a micro-level psychological orientation can contribute significantly to an analysis of intergroup conflict, Kreuzer (2002) argues that its scope of efficacy is limited, doing little to the initial de-escalation of the large-scale intractable conflict. However, COME believes that changes like this on the micro-level promoted by intergroup contact, could in the long-term lead to enduring macro-level changes in society as a whole—effectively ‘changing a culture from within’. Seen from this perspective, it is possible to see that if the aims of these workshops are achieved, group members may be encouraged to build upon a mutual understanding that could be taken to an institutional level in which all members in society may work to develop a common goal for peaceful co-existence.

Besides the contextual uniqueness of the seminars, there are key distinguishing factors in their overall purpose that distinguish the work of COME from other interventions. Examples in the field of conflict research lean towards third party political negotiations to broker peace deals, specifically in the more poignant examples of the Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts (Gidron, Katz & Hasenfeld, 2002; Kelman, 1995). In contrast, the aim of COME foundation is to organise non-political and non-religious seminars, inviting participating individuals to be themselves, learn, self-

reflect and develop within their own comfort and wishes. COME is seen to provide a unique opportunity for Palestinians and Israelis to meet under such circumstances which in daily life would be challenging, if not impossible; thereby facilitating this opportunity, participants are more able to express their concerns and possibly see a different side of the conflict. Thus, if well facilitated, COME believes that through this interaction, participants may be able to engage in genuine and open communication and may be able to understand one another in a more human way that endures beyond the group context of the seminar and into their respective communities.

As a part of their mission statement, COME (2013) stipulate that under the following conditions the acquaintance seminars can be successful in their aims and contribute to a more positive social climate:

- i. Neutral meeting of seminars (outside Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories), taking individuals away from the everyday interferences of their normal lives.
- ii. Low-threshold, equivalent way of meeting: individuals meet outside the political context (e.g. joint lodgings and activities).
- iii. No hidden political agenda: this allows for the process of humanizing the other to be optimum and achievable. The underlying motivation and commitment of the organization is also to encourage participants to maintain contact after the seminar and nominate an informal ambassador to be in their own community.
- iv. Committee members work voluntarily, without ulterior motives which has a motivating effect on (potential) participants.
- v. The Dutch project leader and group supervisors promote and ensure a constructive communication during intergroup encounters (e.g. open communication, listening to each other, respect, and accepting of differences).

2.6.1 Programme of COME seminar

The programme of the COME seminar is put together by the committee members. The committee consists of local and Dutch committee members. Although leading Dutch members have final input on the content of the seminar, the local committee members have the biggest influence on the program and the selection of the participants (COME, 2013). The local members are all former participants of the seminar. Ideally, each circumstantial (cultural) group has two committee members present at the seminar. During the preparation weekend (in which the programme is put together and the selection and preparation of the participants takes place, more local committee members can be involved.

The COME seminars routinely take place once annually in Cyprus, far removed from the context of conflict. Participants and organisers stay together for 10 to 12 days in a hotel, where almost all the activities take place. During the seminar, every day one of the committee members represents as a group chairperson; he/she supervises the day and is responsible for the smooth course of the programme for that day. The program of the seminar offers a variety of intergroup activities as well as more personal reflective activities; The first two to three days are used for making personal acquaintances, followed by national acquaintance and intergroup meetings, after which the schedule turns to introductory exercises. Each of these phases consists of games, meetings, presentations, leisure activities and other specific activities. Halfway through the seminar, an excursion is organized, preferably a hike or activity in the nearest town. COME foundation believes that this gives participants a way to release any tension that may be felt during intergroup exercises (2013). Approximately towards the end of the seminar, a workshop is given by a Greek and a Turkish Cypriots. They start with an introduction to the conflict in Cyprus, after which they explain the current situation, inter-communal talks and solutions. To the participants this can provide another perspective on their own situation. A full programme of events can be found in the appendices (*see*: appendix 8).

2.6.2 COME Seminars: Summary of outcomes until now

In summary, the COME seminars so far have fulfilled the expectations of the organisers regarding the purposes, conditions and method of COME foundation. Overall, previous participants have evaluated the organisation of the seminars as good or excellent, and experienced most activities as meaningful to them (COME, 2010-2015). During the seminar, many inner processes and group processes were at work, and many of the participants reported that they had changed their opinions and feelings about the conflict during the seminar, and intended to change their role in the conflict and to change their daily lives returning home. Almost all participants have expressed their interest to stay in contact with the people that they have met at this seminar, and would like to be involved in the organization of future seminars. All participants until now have described the seminar as important and useful.

Previous evaluations provided about the changes during the seminar can be summarised through five key factors. First: that participants had learnt better listening and speaking skills. Second: participants had learnt new ideas and facts about the conflict they did not know before. Third: participants had been thinking and feeling differently about the personal and national identity of themselves and of other people. Fourth: participants had learnt to see other people as human beings, and similarly, to be less scared of other people. Finally, fifth: that participants had been motivated during the seminar, and wished to make changes to their daily lives after the seminar. Overall, all participants reported that seminars of this kind are in general important for people, and that COME foundation should continue organising such seminars in the future. Many previous participants also expressed an interest to continue contributing to the seminars through follow-up projects, meetings, and support with future seminars.

While previous findings have indicated an overall positive outcome for the COME seminars, information about specific changes pre-seminar to post-seminar regarding participants' ideas, empathy and judgements of the other have not been accurately captured. In summary, discussions during the seminars fostered greater self-reflection and an experience of the seminar as useful and important. Interestingly, group discussions did not contribute to group bonding, learning communication skills and learning to see others from the perspective of their multiple identities as human-beings. Nevertheless, to capture more detailed insights into the participants lived experiences of these changes and of the usefulness of the COME seminars will form a part of the focus in the prospective study.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, a review of the literature was undertaken to explore the phenomena of cultural, ethnic, or *territorial* conflict as it is occasionally referred to in the literature. The focus was to define what is meant in general by conflict, while exploring the literature relating to protracted cultural conflict in the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The essential application of counselling psychology and its unique perspective on these conflicts was also described.

The literature demonstrated how core principles of counselling practice, such as empathy, non-judgement and perspective-taking can be taken from the therapeutic environment and applied to our understanding of cultural conflict and conflict behaviour. In the form of intergroup encounters or group intervention methods, guidelines for competent and effective therapeutic practice can be utilised by third party organisations to develop programmes that bring together groups in conflict. Demonstrating the application of core principles of counselling psychology guidelines to the context of cultural conflict helps to provide meaning to the critical factors that are promoted through intergroup encounters and interventions, namely: respect, empathy, understanding and responsibility—some of which form an integral part of ethical conduct in counselling psychology practice.

This chapter highlighted the importance of ethical and counselling principles in the context of the group process and how these can be applied to the understanding of relationships tentatively formed across conflict lines. However, we have a relatively limited understanding of intervention methods for cultural conflict. Given that the most appropriate examples reviewed from the literature are innovative (i.e. researched in the past 20 years) and relatively heterogeneous in their approach, it is likely that more systematic research would be needed to evaluate the specific responsivity factors of these seminars. Nevertheless, the resources in this review provided a general summary of the useful factors and aspects of intervention methods for conflict that are crucial for the designing of conflict resolution strategies.

Furthermore, this review suggested that any intervention approach should be planned carefully with these factors in mind to maximise positive behavioural outcomes

(i.e. behavioural change) and a transformation in the way that groups in conflict relate to one another. This is particularly relevant to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has seen little signs of abating amid the political endeavours at resolution. Despite this, the intervention approach that is modelled by non-governmental organisations, provided by empirical evidence, demonstrates evidence of their work to address issues at the micro-level of societies in conflict. The role of empathy development was also explored, demonstrating how individuals and groups may learn and feel empathy, and thus *give the other a human face*. Where gaps in the literature were addressed through this review, where suitable, suggestions for future direction were outlined, particularly in the context of the COME foundation seminars. In chapter three, the way this literature was applied to the development of a research method is planned and outlined in detail.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

3.1 Mixed Methods Debate: Implications for Research

With the established reliability and validity of the quantitative and qualitative research designs, the call for a more comprehensive understanding of social and human phenomena have increased the popularity and demand to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods into a mixed design approach (Creswell, 2009). This addresses the increased complexity faced by a growing community of multi-disciplinary researchers and the phenomena they study, resulting in a demand to explore the research tools and designs available from a variety of different lenses. However, the argument raised against the notion of a mixed methods design are the opposed philosophical stances that both quantitative and qualitative research methods propose, rendering them seemingly incompatible for cross-validation or triangulation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Olsen, 2004; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). However, the argument later proposed (see: 4.3 – *Epistemology: rationale for proposed methods*), makes the argument for an alternative stance on the issue that discourages the notion of philosophical incompatibility towards a more heuristic approach. Therefore, this chapter explores the practical implications of combining a diverse set of research methods as complimentary ‘tools’ that allow researchers to answer substantial questions, and helps the field to depart from a ‘philosophy of formalism in research’ (Carey, 1993; Maxcy, 2003).

In addition to their distinctive philosophical assumptions, quantitative and qualitative approaches have given rise to two distinctive methodological approaches, sources of funding, scientific expertise and even the language used to describe their phenomena (Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil, 2002). From this perspective, an argument could be made against the legitimacy of combining methods that interpret the world in fundamentally different ways. However, there are several examples of how mixing methods in research have been reliably carried out, and the models formulated to address their research aims - though examples of these are limited in the field of counselling psychology (Haverkamp, Morrow, and Ponterotto, 2005; Rizq and Target, 2010; Creswell, Fetters, and Ivankova, 2004). Similarly, Creswell (2009) illustrates the increased attention given to mixing methods and what this looks like in research;

Creswell (2009) explains 'mixing', as either the merging of quantitative and qualitative data at one end of the spectrum, while kept separate at the other, or somewhat combined between the two polar positions:

- *Connected* method is that the mixing of quantitative and qualitative designs, are joined by the analysis of the first phase in the research, and data collection of the second phase
- *Integrated* method is that qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously with data being merged into one data set by transforming qualitative data into quantitative values for comparative analysis
- *Embedded* method is also used, whereby either quantitative or qualitative data is preferred as the primary source of data, and the secondary form is embedded to provide confirmatory or supportive information to the main dataset - with this research project as an example.

These provide a primary example of how mixing methods is not only a feasible but pragmatic endeavour that can work in favour of researchers and not against them. Nonetheless, it becomes increasingly evident that the old paradigms are in a state of shift, as they begin to be questioned by a new generation of researchers seeking to bridge the epistemological, ontological and methodological gaps between quantitative and qualitative research. The state of this shift and what will arise from this is yet to be seen, with the present picture remaining somewhat unclear. Perhaps, a more convincing position for the validity and reliability of mixing methods may be to explore and challenge the underling philosophical assumptions of quantitative and qualitative research (see section: 3.3); despite the seemingly incommensurable nature of the respective paradigms, is it possible for quantitative and qualitative research to complement one another within a single research study? This research study provides a primary example of how this was effectively achieved.

3.2 The proposed design

The methods in this study were selected as they provided the opportunity for a fully comprehensive analysis of behavioural change in an area that has received considerably little attention within the current literature. The study observed how a novel situation (i.e. the COME seminar) could transform the experiences of groups of individuals who are parties to conflict. As previously described, very few studies have explored the context of cultural conflict at the micro-level, with studies largely aimed at devising strategic political measures to resolve conflict at the macro-level of society; these measures have lacked the capability to address the core issue of positively transforming the behaviour, beliefs and prejudices conflict groups hold regarding one another. Furthermore, the opportunity this study afforded to analyse long-term behavioural outcomes (*see section: 3.4*) provided valuable insight as to whether the seminars promoted a positive impact on the lives of participants in their communities. The proposed method was therefore unique in its approach to a long-standing problem by adopting different lenses of focus by combining both quantitative and qualitative designs.

The use of a survey design is not only best for evaluating the practical elements of the seminar (i.e. nature and organisation of activities), but can also effectively evaluate participants' behavioural responses to the seminar on a broad range of behavioural measures (i.e. perspective taking, empathy, openness and intergroup forgiveness). Nevertheless, while COME's self-made questionnaires are non-standardized, the advantages are that they provide a direct measure of important aspects of the seminar, the experience, and participants' feelings about these experiences—as opposed to standardised measures that are unable to capture the distinct outcomes unique to this study. Secondly, the inclusion of open-ended items facilitates a greater focus into participants' thoughts and feelings about their experience and what they learned as a result of that encounter with the other group.

Nonetheless, it remained necessary to include within the proposed research, valid and reliable standardised measures, as the main measure is self-made and developed directly to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of COME foundation are being met through the seminar itself. The measures have been developed for participants to evaluate seminar activities on a likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree to strongly agree) with some open questions:

- What is your personal opinion about this kind of seminar?
- How would you like to apply your experiences from this seminar at home?
- Did your ideas, feelings or images about other people change as a result of this experience? If yes, describe how they have changed.

The questionnaire was expanded in recent years to include items that evaluate participants more personal experiences, the key experiences, lessons or messages they take from the seminar, and if possible, whether as a result of the seminar, their views of the other group changed. Furthermore, the proposed standardised surveys were previously published with reliable results and provided useful insight into aspects of intergroup experience and relating to others that were relevant to the aims and objectives of this thesis.

This study proposed a reasonably confident one-tailed hypothesis due to outcome of previous data collected, which indicated an overall positive effect size on behavioural change towards the other group (COME, 2010-2015). To be confident of this assumption, a-priori power calculation was carried out for sample size, and assuming a standard effect size of Cohen's d 0.5, a desired statistical power level of 0.8, and probability of 0.05, a one-tailed hypothesis was confirmed as appropriate, requiring a minimum sample size per group of 27 participants. Considering each seminar has an uptake of up to 30 participants, this justified the overall method and anticipated effect.

Overall, the methodology proposed for this research appeared to lend itself to a significant body of work in the field of counselling psychology that has adopted complementary research designs, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the effectiveness of psychosocial group interventions (Bagheri, Memarian and Alhani, 2007; Clark, Rubenach and Winsor, 2003). In addition, the use of a mixed methods approach demonstrated the integrative standpoint of this thesis, through which the use of various methodical tools were employed to answer the key research questions and provide a comprehensive understanding of meaning in relation to behavioural change.

Thus, the method proposed could help identify not only the usefulness of these seminars, but also the aspects of the seminars that participants found positive and/or

negative. As a result, a genuine contribution could be made to the field of counselling psychology that helps us identify how group intervention methods can help Israeli and Palestinian participants to move beyond the cultural context in which their selves and identity have been constructed, towards a capacity to self-reflect and give the other a more human face. This presented a unique approach to explore a long-standing problem by employing different elements of counselling research and practice in an integrative approach that could be applied to the context of a protracted conflict situation.

3.3 Epistemology: Rationale for proposed methods

Proceeding to a discussion of epistemology was necessary for justifying the choice of methods in this research. The past 20 years have witnessed a demand within the research field for a more diverse approach to methodology since the increased popularity of qualitative methods in counselling psychology (Hanson et al., 2005). With this, discussions regarding the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches into ‘mixed methods’ research have become the centre of heated debate within the literature in the past 40 years. Bryman (2007) questions the extent to which mixed methods can be “genuinely integrated” or whether they are in fact mutually exclusive methods of scientific enquiry. From this perspective, mixed methods are potentially incompatible as such distinctive methods and philosophies cannot legitimately fit into a unified approach (Bryman, 1984). However, this belief is refuted by the pragmatist approach that sees no need for a logical connection to be made between method and paradigm, particularly where methods represent a collection of techniques that can be combined according to the specific research question (Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Firestone, 1987). Meanwhile, others claim that mixed methods research suggests a necessary departure from traditional epistemological schools of thought, which have been historically divided in the “paradigm debate” between the realist (positivist) approaches of quantitative research and the constructivist (phenomenological) approaches of qualitative research (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). With more recent developments in the field of social science, the mixed method approach is viewed as a significantly legitimate and independent research design, in which this research is broadly positioned (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007).

In addition, this raises two key research questions, the first – must philosophical paradigms and research methods necessarily be made to fit? And the second – what is the best philosophical paradigm for mixed methods research, or is there no ‘best fit?’ It is evident that research requires philosophical value, namely the foundation for understanding how we know what we claim to know about the world (epistemology) and the nature of reality (ontology) are integral in validating the process of what we are doing to arrive at what we wish to know (methodology; Greene et al., 1989). However, a mixed method approach provides us with an opportunity to move away from the narrative of a paradigm war, by taking a more practical and explorative approach. Equally, Maxwell (2011) observes a potential misreading of Kuhn’s position on the *incommensurability* of paradigms, arguing that in truth there is no neutral language in which paradigms could be compared and understood; adding that it is not that paradigms are incompatible, but that there are a different set of lenses from which a question may be answered, and can be used simultaneously or in sequential order within a research method (1970 cited in Maxwell, 2011).

The scientific tradition that quantitative and qualitative research are each based in their own philosophical assumptions which form the foundation for each approach has also been refuted as an empirically false “misuse of the paradigm concept” (Maxwell, 2011: p. 28). Instead it may be more useful to adopt a heuristic approach that encourages the use of a range of conceptual and practical resources to answer a specific research concern as opposed to adopting a third, foundational paradigm (otherwise known as pragmatism; Johnson and Gray, 2010). Therefore, to improve our knowledge it should be necessary to adopt a constructivist and realist lens of scientific enquiry as supported by Hacking (1999), who in his analysis of various social phenomena, argued that these could be more effectively understood as both ‘real’ and ‘social constructs’. This construct of knowledge may provide a helpful guiding principle in which to move beyond the impasse in mixed methods research, focusing our research lens to the methodological rather than the metaphysical concerns behind our work (Morgan, 2007).

It is important to stress, that while the argued ‘misuse’ of paradigms and philosophies behind mixed methods research has been explored, this is not advocating the dismissal of those paradigms or their foundational assumptions in favour of adopting an ‘anything goes’ philosophical approach. It highlights the possibility that there may not necessarily be a golden standard, one-size-fits-all philosophical paradigm to mixed

methods research, or if it is at all useful to attempt a synthesis of approaches to form a single unified philosophical model to underpin our work in this field (Cartwright, 2007). However, if we can explore these concepts heuristically, as a series of instruments from which we may select from a toolkit to the advantage of greater theoretical understanding, is this approach not worth supporting?

While pragmatism is proposed as a valuable foundational paradigm for mixed methods research, a more useful philosophical example of resolving the constructivist-realist impasse, may be critical realism (Bhaskar, 1989; Archer et al., 1998). The view combines ontological realism (there are stable and enduring features of reality that exist independent of human conceptualisation), alongside epistemological constructivism (we each experience different parts of reality, thus there are multiple valid constructions of reality). Likewise, this research adopted the broad and deeper understanding of philosophical paradigms as heuristics, in addition to a critical realist stance that acknowledges the influence of researcher's reality-constructions on the phenomena they study. I also appreciate the pragmatist approach that seeks to productively combine approaches as opposed to immersing itself in the logical implications behind them.

This therefore demonstrated the theoretically integrative standpoint of this thesis through a combining of quantitative data to answer the key research question of behaviour change, while the qualitative data provided more in-depth and supportive understanding of meaning.

Overall, the intention of this discussion was to highlight that the various philosophical approaches underpinning research methods are purely lenses through which we may view the subjects under our study. These lenses are essential to our understanding of the world, but these lenses on their own provide an incomplete picture, necessitating the use of multiple lenses to validate, deepen and improve the perspective of the phenomena we choose to study. This may be a more productive approach to mixed methods research than adopting a single, foundational paradigm or theoretical approach through which to understand phenomena in the world.

3.4 Method

I intended to statistically evaluate whether the meeting seminar held between the Israeli and Palestinian participants would result in overall behavioural change. I conducted an inferential study to look at significant behaviour change, primarily using survey data consisting of closed questions for statistical analysis, and a short series of open questions for content analysis. The method also provided an opportunity to understand participants' subjective experiences of the seminar and understand whether they were likely to share their experiences within their communities and provide continued development of a positive social climate between the two cultures.

3.4.1 Procedure

The completion of questionnaires is currently a part of the COME process, but to address the aims of the study, they were altered and standardised questionnaire items added to improve reliability and validity. Therefore, the study was divided into two parts (see below) to address the following key aims of the study:

1. Have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*?
2. What aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful and not helpful in fostering change?

Prospective study

In a pre-post design measure, questionnaires included the same set of items to ask if the seminars in fact brought about behavioural change on three key aspects of behavioural change – global empathy, openness to the other, and intergroup reconciliation.

In the prospective seminar of 29th August to 8th September 2016, data was collected from 28 participants. Approximately a few weeks before the seminar began, participants in the two groups were to meet in their respective communities (i.e. Palestinian territories or Israel) to become acquainted with each other prior to the seminar. At this point the pre-seminar questionnaire was administered to participants by an electronic link sent previously via e-mail to complete the questionnaire on an online survey platform (see: appendix 5). On the last day of the seminar – as COME usually do, participants were requested to fill a post-evaluation questionnaire; participants who

brought laptop computers, could access the link to the survey, otherwise participants were administered the questionnaires in paper format (see: appendix 6).

Before beginning each survey, there was a brief description of the questionnaire, while prior to the pre-seminar questionnaire, a form was administered enclosing the information sheet and consent agreement in which participants could consent to complete all relevant measures in the prospective study (see: appendix 2). No signatures or personal identification were taken to maintain anonymity of participants (except for e-mail addresses which were stored safely on a password protected computer file), therefore they were only required to accept or decline participation within the consent form provided following the information sheet. For those using the paper version of the survey, participants could provide consent at the bottom of the information sheet provided prior to beginning, ticking the relevant box to accept or decline. The pre-questionnaire requested participants to create an anonymous ID code as to identify the respondent, and was requested again in the post-evaluation questionnaire. Those accepting continued with the measures, and those declining discontinued and withdrew. Participants completing the survey online were requested to follow the same consent procedure, this time following an electronic link provided and finding the information sheet followed by the consent box to proceed to the questionnaire.

Retrospective study

I intended to carry out remote Skype audio interviews with 4-8 participants from the prospective seminar of 2016 asking a series of 4 questions (see: appendix 7, for interview protocol). Interviews were conducted between March and April 2017. Based on research conducted by Cooper and McLeod (2015) on client helpfulness and usefulness studies, the aim of this study was to describe the subjective lived experience of participants of changes experienced, attribution of changes, and the helpful and unhelpful aspects of the seminar; therefore, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was conducted on the data. The specific objectives of the retrospective study were as follows:

1. Describe the subjective lived experience of changes in the perception and experience of oneself and others,
2. Describe the subjective lived experience of underlying causes of these changes,
3. Describe the subjective lived experience of helpful aspects of the seminar,
4. Describe the subjective lived experience of less helpful aspects of the seminar.

3.4.2 Participants

Participants in the study were aged between 20 and 35, with 28 participants involved in the prospective seminar of August/September 2016. The group circumstantially consisted of Jewish Israelis, Palestinians '67 (Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967) and Palestinians '48 (Palestinians living in Israel). The entire group were balanced and diverse in composition of age, religion, gender, and political ideas. Furthermore, participants were largely middle class by social background and educated at university degree level. Table 2 below describes key demographics of the sample population in this study:

Table 2. Demographics of Sample Population

Sample Number	Participant Age	Gender	Ethnicity
1	28	1 (Male)	1 ('48 Pal)
2	25	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
3	24	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
4	33	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
5	27	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
6	27	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
7	25	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
8	27	1 (Male)	1 ('48 Pal)
9	31	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
10	22	2 (Female)	2 ('67 Pal)
11	21	2 (Female)	2 ('67 Pal)
12	25	2 (Female)	2 ('67 Pal)
13	26	2 (Female)	2 ('67 Pal)
14	25	1 (Male)	2 ('67 Pal)
15	23	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
16	21	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
17	20	1 (Male)	2 ('67 Pal)
18	28	1 (Male)	2 ('67 Pal)
19	32	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
20	25	2 (Female)	4 (Other stated)
21	24	2 (Female)	1 ('48 Pal)
22	21	1 (Male)	2 ('67 Pal)
23	22	1 (Male)	4 (Other stated)
24	21	2 (Female)	2 ('67 Pal)
25	25	2 (Female)	4 (Other stated)
26	23	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
27	24	2 (Female)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
28	30	1 (Male)	3 (Jewish Israeli)
Mean	25		
Standard Deviation	3.45		

Recruitment

Committee members (former participants of the seminars) of COME are usually responsible for recruiting participants into every annual acquaintance seminar. A snowball sampling technique is adopted to reach out to former participants (who have provided consent to being approached in the future), whether they know others who might be interested in taking part. In the last 2 years, social media has also been used by Israeli committee members of COME to publish announcements on Facebook pages of local universities, or group organisations to attract potential participants. As part of the final selection process for the seminar, interviews are conducted by members of the COME committee with possible participants and a group of up to 30 is chosen based on their level of English, as well as considering diversity as previously described.

Recruitment and interview procedure for retrospective study

All 28 participants from the latest seminar held in August/September 2016 were invited to the follow-up study. However, a sample of between 4 participants were selected for the interview process and was deemed a suitable sample size for IPA analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). To establish those most suitable for the interview process, the following inclusion criteria were applied:

- i. There are at least 2 participants from each circumstantial group (Israeli and Palestinian) to gain a fair and balanced analysis of lived experiences
- ii. Within these groups, there is a diverse composition by age, religion, and gender
- iii. Participants must be able to speak a good level of English

Following the inclusion process, a random selection from those remaining were invited to arrange a suitable time for the interview via e-mail. Participants were informed beforehand that the interview would last approximately 60 minutes. Following the main interview participants were debriefed and given the opportunity to ask any questions about the interview. All information about the interview was given up front within the information sheet and therefore a specific debrief protocol was not needed.

To invite the former participants into the retrospective study, an e-mail message was sent with an information sheet detailing the purpose of the interviews and consent agreement in which participants could consent to attend the telephone interview (see: appendix 3-4). Participants could give consent at the bottom of the information sheet provided by responding to the e-mail sent by COME representative (Maaike Hoffer), thus filling in the blank space whether they agree or decline to participate. The e-mail addresses of participants who consented were forwarded to myself as principal researcher and participants were then contacted to arrange an appropriate time for the interview.

3.4.3 Potential benefit to participants

COME sees the filling in of questionnaires as a self-reflective process in which the participants reflect on his or her own behaviour and judgements towards others. This self-reflective process would ideally improve the effectiveness and duration of the lessons learned by participants in the seminar. As part of COME's standard procedure, the questionnaire filled in at the end of the seminar is also followed by a verbal group evaluation, in which participants' self-reflections are shared and connected with the experiences of others. On the other hand, the retrospective study provided a way to help individuals reflect on their subjective experiences of the seminars, not only to improve the future seminars for COME, but also to help individuals transcend their daily lives for a moment by recalling their experiences of the seminar. It would help them to take stock of their experiences, but also to be reminded of the humanistic values of the seminar, which could influence their behaviour in such a way, that they would relate with others in a more humanistic way within their respective communities.

3.4.4 Measures

Both pre-and post-evaluation surveys used in this study consisted of an identical set of 21 closed items (see: appendix 5 or 6), Q1-11: global empathy, Q12-17: openness to the other, Q18-21: intergroup reconciliation— all standardized to a six-point Likert scale. These items were drawn from the following standardised questionnaires to improve overall reliability and validity of findings in this study (source: PsychTest):

1. Global Empathy Scale (Bachen, Hernández-Ramos & Raphael, 2012)

This instrument was designed to measure participants' global empathy, when compared between one's own culture and that of the other. This measure was selected from a review of empathy research, and was adapted by the authors from the scale of ethno-cultural empathy developed and validated by Wang et al., (2003). Consisting of 11 items measured on a 6-point likert scale, analysing participants' self-awareness of the political and social rights of others, emotional connectedness to others, and the motivation and likelihood of speaking for and acting on behalf for the rights of those who experience discrimination in other parts of the world. A confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the stability and generalizability of these items for global empathy, with a high overall internal consistency cronbach's alpha coefficient of .825 at pre-test, and a post-test score of .872. This suggested that the scale was stable, distinguishing it as measuring a unique construct suitable for use in this study.

2. Openness to the Other Affective Domain Inventory (Cosentino & Solano, 2014)

This instrument was designed to measure affective attraction to the other, specifically, the individual's interest with or attraction to culturally diverse others as well as affective aversion to the other, signifying a distrust of or dislike of culturally diverse others in the world. Consisting of 6 items measured on a 5-point likert, exploratory factor analysis identified 13 items of which the final six were selected for the inventory scale. Three items successfully loaded to a factor termed *Affective Attraction to the Other*, while the remaining three items loaded to a factor termed *Affective Aversion to the Other*. The original sample returned a positive overall internal consistency cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 for affective attraction and .76 for affective aversion. This suggested the scale was stable, showing evidence of incremental validity and convergent validity, distinguishing it as measuring a unique construct suitable for use in this study.

3. Intergroup Reconciliation Scale (Noor et al., 2008)

This instrument was designed to measure the role of social psychologic variables in fostering intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation attitudes with others in the context of cultural conflict. Consisting of 4 items on a 7-point likert scale, the items assessed

participants' inclination to be respectful, engage with, and change their relationships with the other group. One item, *Reconciliation between the two communities is not needed*, is reverse scored. The original sample returned a high overall internal consistency Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89. Items in the scale were factor analyzed revealing a two-factor solution in which all 4 items loaded on a second factor only (loadings of .44–.83) and were positively correlated ($r = .54$). This suggested the scale was stable and appropriate for use as a standardised measure in this study.

The decision to standardize all scales to a 6-point Likert scale was based in preventing response fatigue while responding to evidence that compares scales with varying response categories. Particularly within the context of an explorative study as this, the modest sample size allowed for the standardizing of these scales without causing concern for the predictive validity and reliability of the results as larger studies would suggest. Similarly, research conducted by Jacoby & Matell (1971) concluded that irrespective of the number of response categories used, collapsing response categories would not diminish the reliability or validity of overall results. Meanwhile, studying the variable differences amongst Likert scales (i.e. 4-, 5-, 6-, and 11- point scales) in a sample of 1,217 participants, Leung (2011) concluded that while results on predicative validity are inconclusive, there is no significant difference in the internal structure amongst the varying response categories in terms of mean, standard deviation, correlations, factors loadings, and most importantly Cronbach's alpha. Furthermore, evidence provided by Dawes (2012) found that rescaling varying response categories (i.e. 5-, 7-, and 10-point scales) produced the same mean scores between the 5- and 7-point scales; this suggested that to alter and standardize scale formats would be appropriate and useful for researchers who are concerned that changing scale format will diminish the comparability of historical data. Therefore, despite continual debate, the varying 5-, 6-, and 7-point response scales utilized in this study could be readily transferred and rescaled to a common 6-point format with the resulting data being reasonably comparable and without loss to the quality of the overall data.

Meanwhile, the only difference between the pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires were that the pre-questionnaire included brief demographic questions regarding participants interests in the seminar, their main desire for participating, what

they expected from participating, and what they felt would be a successful outcome from the seminar. In addition, the post-evaluation questionnaire included open items for participants to evaluate general aspects of the seminar and the experience that might answer what aspects of the seminar helped to foster change:

- i. What are the three key experiences, lessons or messages that you will take home from the seminar?
- ii. How would you like to apply your experiences from this seminar at home?
- iii. What is your personal opinion about this kind of seminar, do you believe it is useful?

4. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA is a qualitative approach that is committed to the understanding of how people make sense of their subjective, lived experiences (Smith, 2015; Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Shinebourne, 2011). Concerned with exploring these experiences through the eyes of the individual, IPA researchers are especially interested in how experiences take on a unique importance for people and the meaning this entails (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

IPA is underpinned by three primary theoretical positions in turn: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Smith and Shinebourne, 2012). Phenomenology is the philosophical approach that is concerned with subjective human experience. Husserl (1927, cited in Smith et al., 2009) is primarily credited for founding the position, emphasising the approach that attends to the lived experience itself rather than predetermined categories. For the counselling psychologist, this would refer to “bracketing one’s preconceptions and allowing the phenomenon to speak for itself” (Smith and Shinebourne, 2012: p.73).

While IPA is concerned with the lived experience, it understands that such experience requires a process of active enquiry and interpretation of people’s lives, therefore IPA is motivated by hermeneutics– the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). In attempting to interpret the participants lived experience, IPA in this study offered a double hermeneutic account. During interviews, participants’ attempts to make sense of their lived experience of the COME seminars offered one interpretation

while the researcher's attempts to make sense of the data provided the second interpretation (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Meanwhile, the double hermeneutic account exposes the importance of the researcher's continued reflexivity in response to the process of data analysis, while maintaining awareness of how the researcher's own subjectivity may influence interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). By acknowledging my own influences and cultural biases, it was my responsibility and endeavour as a competent researcher to bracket off my own assumptions in the process of interpretation and analysis.

Finally, IPA as an idiographic approach is committed to a nuanced and detailed account of individual experiences (Smith et al., 2009). While this research could not avoid general claims, generalisations were only made in response to careful analysis of each specific case in a homogenous population (i.e. adult participants) and their experience of the phenomena (change, usefulness/non-usefulness of experience) in a unique context (COME seminar). In turn, each case was interpreted and analysed, observing for patterns across cases while maintaining the integrity of the individual account. Therefore, a successful IPA does not require a large sample size to obtain depth and understanding of the phenomena in question, rather by a process of convergence and divergence across the homogenous sample, the researcher draws depth of understanding through the themes that are generated, which to some extent were used to understand the group's that these participants represent (Smith and Shinebourne, 2012).

Overall, the aim of IPA is to develop an interpretive account of what it is like to be human through the eyes of the participant in question, developing an account that is faithful to the experience of their lived world. This constituted the key rationale for IPA as the chosen methodology for the retrospective study, as these aims adhered with those of this research, which was concerned with developing insight into participants lived experiences of change and the perceived usefulness of the COME seminar in 2016.

3.4.5 Ethics

Regarding ethical concerns, participants in each group received information forms (see: appendix 2-3) that explained that the aim of the study was to gather their opinions on the seminar and whether it provided a meaningful experience for both groups; pros and cons of filling in the questionnaires will be explained, as well as information about data protection and keeping their identities anonymous.

Ethical issues could arise from the use of surveys in the prospective study, specifically regarding confidentiality, bias and participant responses to open questions. To preserve confidentiality, participants were assigned a unique number to every survey administered that they would be anonymously identified by in all subsequent analyses. This process ensured that responses could not be matched by members of the organisation or by myself when analysis took place. Personal identifiable information was not shared with any third parties outside of the organisation. There is also need to consider issues of acquiescent and extreme response bias. However, by including positive and negative order items within the surveys, participants were required to consider the question and ideally provide more meaningful responses. In effect would help to avoid acquiescent and extreme response bias. Therefore, in considering personal biases and assumptions, I took responsibility as a researcher in committing to remain fair, non-judgmental and understanding of participants and their experiences by following ethical guidelines of practice (i.e. BPS) when conducting analysis and evaluation of the findings. It is important to bracket these assumptions to work ethically in the best interest of participants and their unique experiences.

Privacy and confidentiality

No signatures or personal identification were taken from participants at the point of collecting data in the prospective study as to maintain anonymity of participants. Overall, participants were only required to accept or decline participation within respective consent forms used in this study, which were provided following the information sheets. For those receiving this via e-mail, the consent protocol was shown as the first page before the questionnaire. Participants were informed that they may stop participating at any time and may decide not to answer any specific question during the interview. Their decision to participate or not, and/or to stop an interview or survey, would not have any

effect on the opportunities given by COME foundation, although if a participant declined, they were informed that their data might still be used in a collated form.

In the retrospective study, no signatures or personal identification were taken from participants as to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants, except for names and e-mail addresses which were stored safely on a password protected computer file belonging to the principle researcher with no other person given access; only COME representative, Maaïke Hoffer had access to participants contact details. Telephone conversations were recorded through computer software (Skype), any identifying information was changed to pseudonyms during transcribing and analysis, and this information was not included in analysis. Recordings were also kept secure and in their own files on a locked and private computer belonging to the principle researcher, with no other means of access by other persons.

Management of potential risk

It is important to highlight the concerns arising out of potential risk that could be identified within open questions within the surveys as well as responding to interview questions. If potential risk of harm to self or others was identified in participants, confidentiality concerning the respective participants' identity would be broken by informing the head COME seminar convener (Maaïke Hoffer) whose general role is to manage the group processes and guard the safety of the seminar participants whilst they participate inside and outside of the seminar. In some cases, if participants expressed distress, they were informed by COME members during the seminar of their group representative committee member whom they could approach for further advice and support. However, to the potential (though highly unlikely) disclosure of criminal/dangerous activity, confidentiality would be broken and the independent seminar convener from the Netherlands, whose role is to manage the group processes and guard the safety of the seminar participants, would be consulted regarding further required actions such as informing appropriate legal authorities. Overall, in satisfaction of ethical approval, I took responsibility for the COME participants, as so far as they were involved in this study and not for their activities and involvement in connection to the seminar itself for which I was not directly affiliated.

3.4.6 Analysis

To address the relevant research aims of the study, data analysis should comprehensively capture the body of data so that we are able to understand whether they have been met, specifically: whether there was behavioural change in participants' perceptions of themselves in relation to the other group and the precise nature of that change.

Data obtained through the prospective surveys were readily transferred into software for analysis either by paper format or directly from the online survey platform used for the completion of the surveys (Qualtrics). Meanwhile in the preliminary stages, preparatory analyses were conducted to assess the fit of data for specific test measures. For example, a confirmatory power analysis on the sample of obtained data and descriptive analysis of the reliability and validity of the questionnaires that include basic descriptive statistics for normality of distribution (i.e. measures of central tendency, spread, and significance) were carried out. Further to this I intended to carry out the following tests to answer the main objective of whether we could observe behavioural change in participants and the nature of that change:

1. Have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*?

Observed by a pre-post design measure, a paired samples T-Test was suitable to analyse this question. Meanwhile to analyse any observed changes between independent groups (i.e. gender, cultural group), a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was suitable for this question; both tests assume that data would be parametric.

2. What aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful in fostering change?

Content analysis as a generic approach to qualitative analysis was also utilised to answer this research aim regarding the process of change by observing the frequency, presence, meanings and relationships of words within open questions– and make valid inferences about the messages within the text (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). From this, the text was broken into manageable categories that were labelled and coded; these would be key words, phrases, sentences and even themes that highlighted participants' evaluations of the seminar, and whether they felt their opinions had changed following the experience.

Meanwhile, the audio interviews conducted for the retrospective study were audio recorded (as participants were located within Israel and Palestinian territories), and transcribed for qualitative interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). The aim with

this method was to understand participants' experiences of the usefulness and meaningfulness of the seminars, and experiences of changes in their ideas, feelings or images in themselves and others (i.e. what changes occurred, if any, and why). These helped to inform a more detailed analysis of whether the seminars are essentially helping to change participants' perceptions of themselves in relation to the other.

When analysing the data, the researcher adhered to the following guidelines outlined by Smith et al., (2009) and Smith and Shinebourne (2012). For the process of illustrating the analytic process, an overview of these steps is provided below:

1. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, including transcription of all utterances, pauses, repetitions and any audible non-verbal communication. For ease of reference, lines and pages were numbered (see: Appendix 9 for transcript extract).
2. To assure accuracy of interpretation, commence a close reading of the data, reading each transcript repeatedly - reading through the first time while listening to the audio recording of the original interview. This enhances familiarity with participants' account of their world and aids a more complete analysis overall.
3. This stage involved noting initial observations and reflections of each transcript line-by-line. Exploratory commenting was conducted adopting three discrete processes, each with a different focus: descriptive (phenomenological), linguistic, and conceptual (increasingly conceptual) levels of analysis. All exploratory comments made in the right-hand margin of the transcript were differentiated by normal text (descriptive comments), italics (linguistic comments), or underlined (conceptual comments). An example is provided in Appendix 9
4. The next stage involves the development of emerging themes which were noted in the left-hand column of each transcript. Here, the researcher worked primarily with the exploratory commentary to formulate a more psychological conceptualisation of the data.
5. Table 3 below, demonstrates the next step to find connections between the emergent themes as entered in this table for Rachel in chronological order, alongside key extracts from the raw data to aid recollection of the basis for each emerging theme.

Table 3. Selection of emerging themes with key phrases for one participant (see: appendix 10 for all emerging themes from this transcript)

Emerging theme	Page/Line number	Key phrase
Unexpected feelings	3/136-137	“I was surprised that it that it's very affected me that much”
Degree of change	3/143	“The amount of like how much”
Freedom of expression	3/145-148	“I felt like I have a lot of space like the seminar gave me a lot of like a lot of space to talk”
Openness to the other	4/176-178	“Everyone was very into learning and listening”
Openness to change	4/188-189	“I could be very open to accept new opinions.”

6. The next stage consisted of drawing connections between emerging themes, transferring them in a separate list to aid movement and grouping towards the development of master themes. Smith et al., (2009) suggest several ways to look for patterns and connections between these emerging themes, such as ‘abstraction’, ‘subsumption’ and ‘contextualisation’ (p. 96-98) which were particularly useful in this analysis. Emergent themes were subsequently revised according to conceptual similarities and grouped within superordinate themes. Table 3.1 below shows a part of this process for Rachel.

Table 3.1. Initial cluster of themes for one participant (extract)

Initial cluster of themes (extract)	
Openness to experience: an encounter with the other Experience of strong emotions Openness: readiness to talk Overwhelming emotion/experience Openness: lowering defences Openness to change Reality of conflict Reality of conflict: complex Reality of conflict: living with fear Need and desire for freedom Normalization as problematic Reality of conflict: change as problematic	Seminar as facilitating a process Freedom of expression Empowerment Expression and processing of emotion (facilitating process) Facilitating process: space for dialogue A neutral space (for dialogue) Seminar as well organised (factors facilitating process) Facilitating process: breaking the ice Facilitating a process: providing reassurance and safety

7. The previous steps were repeated for each transcript, and in accordance with IPA idiographic commitment, each transcript was treated as a unique and individual case in its own terms. Finally, patterns were explored across each of the cases, and a final group of master themes for the group of participants were developed, underlining associated superordinate themes. Table 3.2 below, illustrates an example of one of the master themes.

Table 3.2. Master Theme 1 and illustrative examples for respective subthemes and line numbers

Master Theme 1: Managing Friendships	
A. Fragility of friendship	Line number
“They didn't know how to...accept me, they were like divided between themselves I think”	952-955
“You love them...but in the same time what they believe in is totally different than what you believe in”	71-75
“I'm a Palestinian who lives in the West Bank and there's like something that prevents me preserving this relationship between us”	107-112
“Even if you do meet...I teach Palestinian women Hebrew we would never have these conversations because you don't want to. You don't want to touch these hard feelings”	636-641
B. Co-existence	
“We could hang out all the groups together”	698-699
“I believe it's up to the people, it's up to co-existence”	826-827
“We were just there as humans and I figured out that we can live together if we want to, if we just hear the other side and try to understand”	762-767
“We are humans. (...) When you discover these things...you can build something on that base that can go up and up and up”	431 and 436-441
C. Hope and meaning	
“It really opened my mind also my heart to people from the other side who want to end the conflict. (...) If there's a solution or there's let's say reconciliation...maybe I can explore these relationships”	628-631/338-342
“A girl came with other Israeli friends for Christmas...and I found that very nice”	314-318
“Away of the eye away of the heart, but when you know someone you can't just say I don't care.”	23-26
“This was like one of the biggest if not the biggest...most influential experience that I had in my life. (...) I found myself in my room playing to four Palestinians with the guitar and we're all singing”	95-99/927-931

3.4.7 Reflective Process

As I take a reflective stance on my work, I see the value in developing an honest and representative narrative of the lives of the phenomena we study –our participants. For the importance of transparency, I took the time to reflect on the personal influences that will have inevitably informed my choice of this study and how this may have influenced the work (Ortlipp, 2008).

I am 28-year-old female and identify as British with Middle Eastern heritage. I also identify as agnostic and heterosexual. While I was born and raised in England, I was educated with an awareness and appreciation of my cultural roots. In my choice to explore this topic, I was influenced by several personal and academic pursuits. Coming from a middle eastern background, I have been progressively aware of the stigma of mental illness within these communities and the attribution of illness to evil spirits or ‘jinn’. Therefore, following my undergraduate degree in Psychology it has always been a keen interest of mine to encourage dialogue on this issue, hoping to inspire communities to break the taboo of mental illness and develop awareness of the importance of mental health to overall well-being. A curiosity to pursue a study of psychology in the middle subsequently drew my attention to this project that was proposed by my academic supervisor.

Through further introspection, I found that the study of such a complex, intractable issue represented my desire to contribute (on a micro level) to a subject that was so widely misrepresented (on a macro level). While it could be said that originating from a Middle Eastern background, I affiliate strongly with the struggles of the Palestinian people, I am neither Palestinian nor was I interested in the pursuit of representing a side (despite my awareness of the history from the Arab perspective). As a Middle-Eastern trainee counselling psychologist, my motivation was led by the desire to understand, much like my participants, how ‘the other’ felt, to appreciate the humanness of the other, and therefore contribute in a positive way to the community that are concerned with reconciliation and rehabilitation efforts between diverse communities in the Middle-East - as well as the world.

In this endeavour, I reflected on the values mental health practitioners inevitably bring to their work, we are fundamentally human, when we are seated in such an intimate environment with another, we cannot help but bring our ‘self’ and be impacted by what we

hear. However, by maintaining awareness and reflexivity of our own process– separating our own material from that of the other will allow us to see the human side of the person we are seated with, and to appreciate that we may be more alike than we think. Overall, it is evident how my choices to pursue this project were based on my experiences of being raised as a British-Middle eastern and the importance of paying attention to and respecting aspects of difference (see: chapter five, *review of researcher's reflexivity*).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The sample population from the latest COME seminar in Aug-Sept 2016 was a total of 28 participants. The sample was evenly distributed in gender, comprising of 14 males and 14 females. Overall, participants were in the age range of 20-25 years old, presenting with an average age of 25 years old. According to religious background, 4 participants identified as Muslim, 13 identified as Jewish, 9 identified as Christian and 2 did not identify a religious affiliation. Describing their cultural background, 3 participants identified as '48 Palestinian, 9 identified as '67 Palestinian, 13 identified as Jewish Israeli, and 3 identified as 'other'.

Of this sample population, 23 cases were successfully matched at pre- and post-measurement and results of these analyses will be described below demonstrating the most suitable and robust statistical tests for this moderate sample size. The details of the subsequent qualitative follow-up study will follow the presentation of these results.

4.1 Preliminary analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted to understand the nature and quality of the data collected. This in turn will inform the correct procedure for analysing the data in accordance with the aims of the study. Furthermore, in deciding a significance level, an alpha of .05 is deemed appropriate for an explorative study. Meanwhile any observations between .05 and .08 could also be observed as a trend.

To be confident of this assumption, a-priori power calculation was carried out for sample size, and assuming a standard effect size of Cohen's d 0.5, a desired statistical power level of 0.8, and probability of 0.05, a one-tailed hypothesis was confirmed as appropriate, requiring a minimum sample size per group of 27 participants. Considering the current seminar has a total of 28 participants, this justifies the overall method and anticipated effect.

4.1.1 Reliability Analyses

Table 4. Reliability analysis for standardised sub-scales

	Sub-scale	No. of Items	Reliability (α)
Combining pre/post total scores	Global Empathy	22	.819
	Openness to the Other		
	<i>Affective attraction</i>	6	.741
	<i>Affective aversion</i>	6	.663
	Intergroup Reconciliation	8	.569
Pre-Score	Global Empathy	11	.774
	Openness to the Other		
	<i>Affective attraction</i>	3	.649
	<i>Affective aversion</i>	3	.659
	Intergroup Reconciliation	4	.72
Post-Score	Global Empathy	11	.832
	Openness to the Other		
	<i>Affective attraction</i>	3	.684
	<i>Affective aversion</i>	3	.771
	Intergroup Reconciliation	4	.684

Reliability reports from the original surveys:

- i. Global empathy (Cronbach's Alpha = .825 pre-test and .872 post-test in a sample of 301 students)
- ii. Openness to the other (3-items for affective attraction to the other, Cronbach's Alpha = .82 and 3-items for affective aversion to the other, Cronbach's Alpha = .76 – conducted from a sample of approximately 250-650 participants)
- iii. Intergroup reconciliation (Cronbach's Alpha = .89, in a sample of approximately 400 participants longitudinal study)

As shown in *table 4* (above), overall, the three standardised subscales demonstrated good internal reliability, which justified their robustness and suitability for use in this study.

4.1.2 Testing for normality

As a prerequisite for conducting parametric tests, the normality of the data was assessed through the following procedures: Shapiro-Wilk Test, tests of Skewness and Kurtosis. The Shapiro-Wilk Test was selected as a more appropriate numerical test for normality due to the small sample size of this study ($n = 28$). Large probabilities denote normally distributed data; therefore, we looked for significance greater than 0.05 (typical alpha level) to determine normality. A full table of the analysis is presented within appendix 11 (see: table 4). While results of the test showed variability in scores, scores highlighted show that the majority fulfilled criteria for normality, including pre-test and post-test *Behaviour Total* (.223 and .106 respectively). Therefore, we accepted the null hypothesis that these data were not different from normal (i.e. scores come from normally-distributed data). Meanwhile, enhanced testing of normality was carried out by calculating summary statistics for Skewness and kurtosis on each respective subscale. To determine the appropriate assumption of normality, both scores were divided by their standard error (SE), on the basis that if results were greater than ± 1.96 , the data would not be normal with respect to that statistic. The full analysis of this procedure is presented in appendix 11.

Results show that skewness and kurtosis were largely within the acceptable range for normality (± 1.96). More specifically, pre-test and post-test behaviour total scores showed that skewness was negative (-1.43 and -1.56 respectively), indicating that the data was moderately left-skewed. Meanwhile pre-test and post-test scores for kurtosis were both positive (.35 and .96 respectively), indicating that the data was peaked leptokurtic compared to a normal distribution. Overall, these results suggested that the departure from normality was not extreme and that the use of parametric tests for this dataset was appropriate.

4.1.3 Checking for outliers and missing data

Outliers

Specifically observing pre-test behaviour total scores, one outlier was identified with the most extreme low-end score (77.0). Expected value was 5% trimmed mean = 95.8 in comparison to the original mean = 95.4. This showed little difference; thus, the outlier had little influence on the overall mean. Skewness = -.689, Kurtosis = .330. This result

was confirmed by a visual inspection of the pre-test behaviour total box plot, showing a slight skewness to the left (*see*: appendix 11). Meanwhile, overall post-test behaviour total scores showed no identified outliers in the sample. Expected value was 5% trimmed mean = 99.0 in comparison to the original mean = 98.7, therefore showing minimal overall difference. Skewness = $-.754$, Kurtosis = $.898$. This result was confirmed by a visual inspection of the post-test behaviour box plot showing a high level of skewness to the left (*see*: appendix 11, figures 1 and 1.1).

Missing data

24 cases were initially matched at pre-test and post-test level; however, one case was removed from dataset due to non-responses to the subscales at pre-survey, resulting in 23 final cases for analysis. Only two data entries were missing randomly which were replaced by missing value -9999, therefore [multiple] imputation method was not required.

4.2 Prospective study: final analysis

The following statistical analyses are presented in two parts to answer key explorative research questions: Have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*? And what aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful in fostering change?

The first part describes statistically, any observed changes between pre- and post-measurement in participants' behaviour, analysing each of the three subscales for possible changes and interactions. The second part explores qualitatively what aspects of the seminar were helpful or not helpful, and what participants experienced in themselves and others resulting from their participation in the seminar.

4.2.1 Have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*?

A pre-test/post-test measure was utilised to address this research question. Each survey administered (both before and after the seminar) comprised three subscales to measure behavioural change: Global Empathy Scale, Intergroup Reconciliation Scale, and Openness to the Other Affective Domain Inventory (Bachen, Hernández-Ramos, & Raphael, 2012; Noor et al., 2008; Cosentino, & Solano, 2014). The results of a pre-test/post-test comparison are shown below utilizing the Paired-Samples T-Test, with the initial descriptive statistics presented in table 5 (below).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of subscales at pre- and post-test level

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Total Score for Global Empathy (PRE)	53.8696	6.14450	11	66
Total Score for Global Empathy (POST)	56.3478	5.70971	11	66
Total Score for Openness to the Other (PRE)	20.9565	2.01084	6	36
Total Score for Openness to the Other (POST)	21.3913	2.25104	6	36
Total Score for Intergroup Reconciliation (PRE)	20.5652	3.08701	4	24
Total Score for Intergroup Reconciliation (POST)	20.9130	3.27404	4	24

Overall Behavioural Change

According to the purpose of this study total scores were combined for Global Empathy, Intergroup Reconciliation and Openness to the Other to develop a measure of Overall Behavioural Change.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare any observed changes in behaviour before and after the seminar. There was no significant difference in the scores before the seminar ($M=95.4$, $SD=7.17$) and after the seminar ($M=98.7$, $SD=9.15$); $t(22)=-1.94$, $p = 0.06$. While this is the case, it is also important to consider how strongly the two variables are associated with one another. The bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that pre-test overall behaviour and post-test overall behaviour scores are significantly positively correlated ($r=.533$, $p = .009$). Overall, these results suggest that while there is an observable change in overall behaviour, there is no significant difference between pre-test to post-test measure.

Global Empathy

To analyse any observed changes within the individual subscales, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare global empathy scores before and after the seminar. There was no significant difference in the scores before the seminar ($M=53.9$, $SD=6.14$) and after the seminar ($M=56.3$, $SD=5.71$); $t(22)= -1.71$, $p = 0.1$. The bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that while pre-test global empathy and post-test global empathy scores are positively correlated and statistically significant, the effect is small ($r= .321$, $p = .009$). Overall, this result suggests that while there is an observable change in global empathy, there is no significant difference between pre – to – post measure.

Intergroup Reconciliation

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare intergroup forgiveness scores before and after the seminar. There was no significant difference in the scores before the seminar ($M=20.6$, $SD=3.09$) and after the seminar ($M=20.9$, $SD=3.27$); $t(22)= -0.74$, $p = 0.5$. The bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that pre-test intergroup reconciliation and post-test intergroup reconciliation scores are significantly and highly positively correlated ($r=.752$, $p < .05$). Overall, this result suggests that while there is an observable change in intergroup reconciliation, there is no significant difference between pre – to – post measure.

Openness to the Other

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare intergroup forgiveness scores before and after the seminar. There was no significant difference in the scores before the seminar ($M=20.9$, $SD=2.01$) and after the seminar ($M=21.4$, $SD=2.25$); $t(22) = -0.87$, $p = 0.4$. The bivariate Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that while pre-test openness to the other and post-test openness to the other scores are positively correlated, the effect is small and non-significant ($r=.375$, $p = .07$). Overall, this result suggests that while there is an observable change in openness to the other, there is no significant difference between pre – to – post measure.

In summary, these initial findings tell us that despite a non-statistical significance in behavioural change from pre – to – post measure, the observable changes in means indicated a promising trend towards a change in participants' behaviour. However, the implications of these findings in the context of the sample population highlight an important problem regarding low statistical power. The loss of power (due to a small sample size of $n=23$ matched cases), negatively affected the likelihood that a nominally statistically significant finding could be achieved, and if it were, whether a statistically significant finding would reflect a true effect. The implications of these overall findings are reviewed further.

4.2.2 Additional Analysis: Between Groups Effects

To answer the initial research question in more depth, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there is statistical evidence that our population means are significantly different from one another. Thus, to analyse the dataset primarily on factors of gender and cultural group, the two-way repeated measures ANOVA facilitated a measure of these dependent variables over the two pre-and-post time points of each subscale. Firstly, the relevance of conducting analysis on gender differences is reinforced by the ways in which culture sets the standard of desirable gender-appropriate values, motives, and behaviours. Therefore, we were interested in observing whether the findings revealed observable differences in the ways males and females presented in relation to global empathy, openness to the other, and intergroup reconciliation behaviours. Secondly, the interest in conducting analysis on cultural differences recognises that behaviour is influenced by both natural and environmental

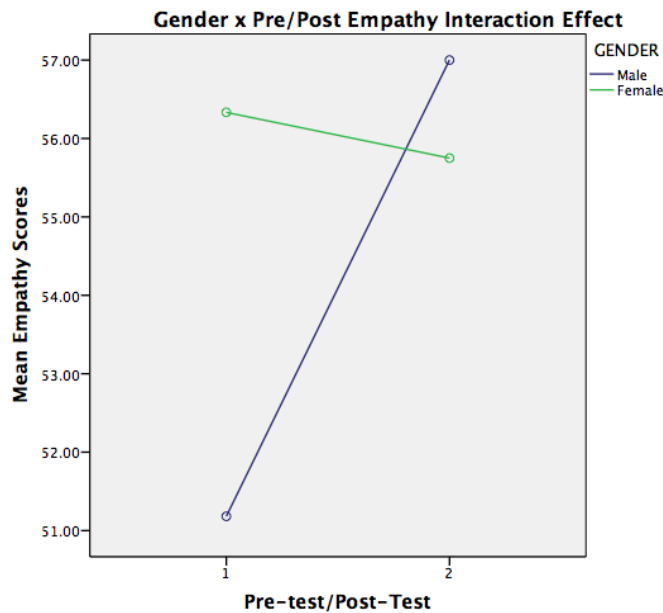
factors, and that culture is an implicit environmental influence on people's behaviour, via cultural norms, beliefs and practices. Therefore, we were interested in observing whether the findings revealed observable differences in the ways the Israeli and Palestinian groups presented in relation to global empathy, openness to the other, and intergroup reconciliation behaviours.

Overall, the primary focus was to compare mean differences between the groups and understand if there was a statistically significant interaction between the two factors on each of the dependent variables of interest. Beginning with gender, an analysis of each of the three subscales was explored for significant main effects and interactions.

The effect of Gender

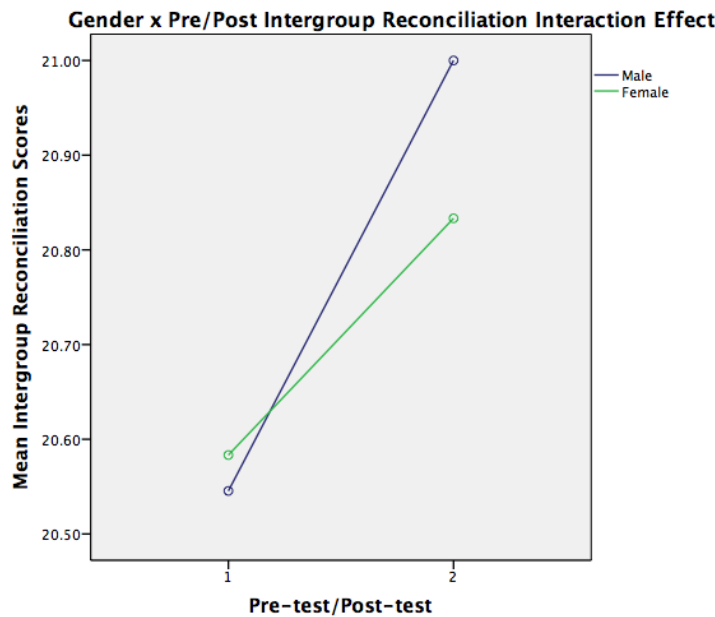
- i. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of gender with global empathy over time. The dependent variable was global empathy, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test empathy scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were gender (male/female). There was a non-significant main effect of empathy over time, $F(1,21) = 4.05$, $p = .057$, $\eta^2 = .16$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the gender of participants, empathy from pre-test to post-test was not significantly different. There was also a non-significant main effect for gender, $F(1,21) = .94$, $p = .34$, $\eta^2 = .04$. However, there was a significant interaction between global empathy over time and the gender of the participant, $F(1,21) = 6.05$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = .22$. This effect tells us that time had a different effect on global empathy between males and females, with male participants showing the greatest change in empathy over time in relation to female participants. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2. Profile plot of pre/post empathy by gender interaction.



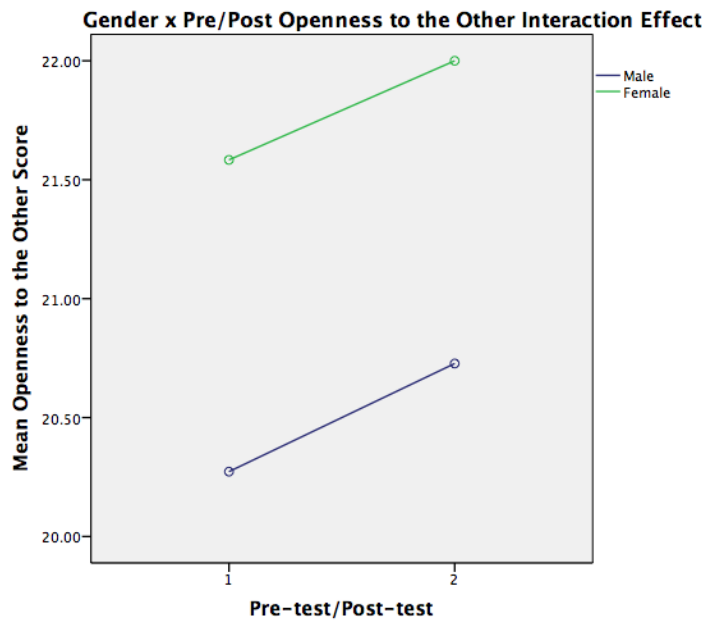
- ii. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of gender with intergroup reconciliation over time. The dependent variable was intergroup reconciliation, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test reconciliation scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were gender (male/female). There was a non-significant main effect for intergroup reconciliation over time, $F(1,21) = .54$, $p = .47$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the gender of participants, intergroup reconciliation from pre-test to post-test was not significantly different. There was also a non-significant main effect for gender, $F(1,21) = .00$, $p = .96$. Furthermore, there was a non-significant interaction between intergroup reconciliation over time and the gender of the participant, $F(1,21) = .05$, $p = .83$. This result tells us that at pre-to-post measure, intergroup reconciliation did not have a different effect between male and female participants, showing a marginal difference in behaviour change. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Profile plot of pre/post intergroup reconciliation by gender interaction.



- iii. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of gender with openness to the other over time. The dependent variable was openness to the other, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test openness scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were gender (male/female). There was a non-significant main effect for openness to the other over time, $F(1,21) = .73$, $p = .40$, $\eta^2 = .03$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the gender of participants, openness to the other from pre-test to post-test were not significantly different. There was also a non-significant main effect for gender, $F(1,21) = 3.40$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .14$. Furthermore, there was a non-significant interaction between openness to the other over time and the gender of the participant, $F(1,21) = .00$, $p = .97$, $\eta^2 = .00$. This result tells us that at pre-to-post measure, openness to the other did not have a significantly different effect between male and female participants. While males began with a higher pre-test score in comparison to females, both post-test scores demonstrate only slight variance in change with openness to the other. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 2.2:

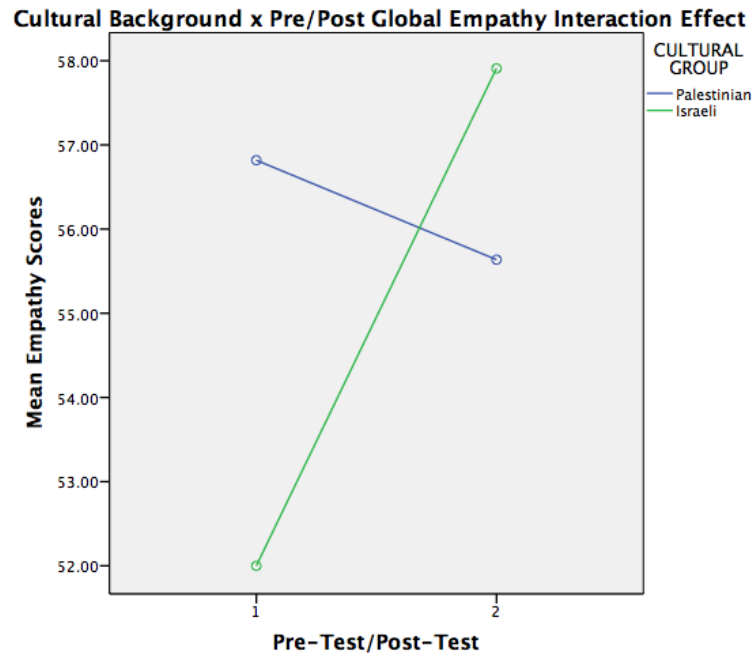
Figure 2.2. Profile plot of pre/post openness to the other by gender interaction.



The effect of Cultural Background

- i. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of cultural background with global empathy over time. The dependent variable was global empathy, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test empathy scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were cultural background (Israeli/Palestinian). There was a non-significant main effect of empathy over time, $F(1,20) = 3.19$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2 = .14$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the cultural background of participants, empathy from pre-test to post-test was not significantly different. There was also a non-significant main effect for cultural background, $F(1,20) = .46$, $p = .5$, $\eta^2 = .02$. However, there was a significant interaction between global empathy over time and the cultural background of the participant, $F(1,20) = 7.19$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .26$. This result tells us that at pre-to-post, global empathy had a different effect between the Israeli and Palestinian cultural groups, with the Israeli group demonstrating a greater change in empathy than the Palestinian group from pre-to-post measure. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 3:

Figure 3. Profile plot of pre/post empathy by cultural background interaction

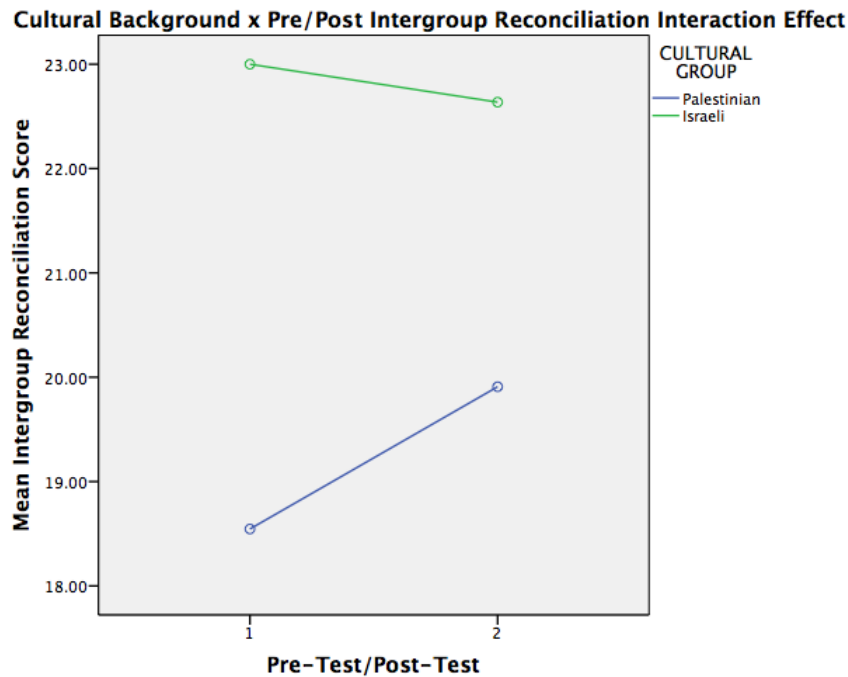


- ii. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of cultural background with intergroup reconciliation over time. The dependent variable was intergroup reconciliation, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test intergroup reconciliation scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were cultural background (Israeli/Palestinian). There was a non-significant main effect of intergroup reconciliation over time, $F(1,20) = 1.32$, $p = .26$, $\eta^2 = .06$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the cultural background of participants, intergroup reconciliation from pre-test to post-test was not significantly different. However, there was a significant main effect for cultural background, $F(1,20) = 17.02$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .46$. Meanwhile, there was a marginal non-statistical significance for the interaction between intergroup reconciliation over time and the cultural background of the participant, $F(1,20) = 3.95$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2 = .16$. What this indicates, is that despite the Palestinian group demonstrating a greater trend towards change, the Israeli group initially demonstrated higher levels of intergroup reconciliation behaviours than the Palestinian group.

Overall, this result indicates the presence of an association, but the study was underpowered to detect a significant result. Thus, at pre-to-post, intergroup reconciliation did not have a significant effect between the Israeli and Palestinian

cultural groups. This example demonstrates the loss of power due to a small sample size. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 3.1:

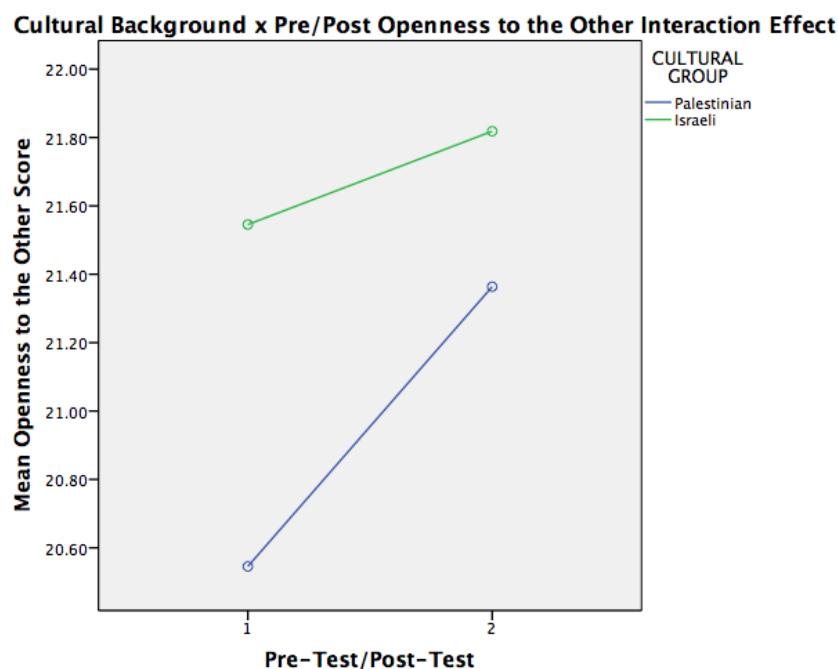
Figure 3.1. Profile plot of pre/post intergroup reconciliation by cultural background interaction



- iii. A two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the effect of cultural background with openness to the other over time. The dependent variable was openness to the other, which had two levels (pre-test and post-test openness scores), while the within-subjects factors (IV) were cultural background (Israeli/Palestinian). There was a non-significant main effect for openness to the other over time, $F(1,20) = 1.11$, $p = .3$, $\eta^2 = .05$. This effect tells us that if we ignore the cultural background of participants, openness to the other from pre-test to post-test was not significantly different. There was also a non-significant main effect for cultural background, $F(1,20) = 1.05$, $p = .32$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Overall, there was a non-significant interaction between openness to the other over time and the cultural background of the participant, $F(1,20) = .28$, $p = .6$, $\eta^2 = .01$. This result tells us that at pre-to-post, openness to the other did not have a different effect between the Israeli and Palestinian cultural groups. This may be interpreted by the

pre-test scores for both groups demonstrating already high levels of openness to the other (Israeli group = 21.55, Palestinian group= 20.55) in comparison to the test minimum score of 6, with post-test scores showing marginal change nearing the maximum score of 36 (Israeli group= 21.88, Palestinian group= 21.36), which raises the question of a ceiling effect. The profile plot for this interaction is shown in figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2. Profile plot of pre/post openness to the other by cultural background interaction



Overall, the results demonstrate that behavioural change was statistically non-significant from pre-to-post measure. However, mean scores across each of the three domains suggested a promising trend towards an overall change in behaviour. Furthermore, the additional analyses into potential between-group interaction effects, while indicating some significant interaction effects for global empathy with gender and cultural background, overall, found non-significant interactions and main effects across each subscale for cultural group and gender. In highlighting these findings, the researcher acknowledges that conducting multiple analyses on the same data reduced power and thus increased the probability of type one errors. Similarly, the pattern in mean scores demonstrated across each subscale in response to gender and cultural differences

underlines the measurement limitation of a ceiling effect. With participants scoring positively on nearly all items across the three measurement instruments (thus scoring close to the maximum score), the researcher considers that what was measured may be more a reflection of the parameters of what each scale was able to measure than of how individual participants may have been ultimately functioning in response to behaviour change.

Nonetheless, an overall finding that does not meet statistical significance may still be clinically important, and thus warranted further consideration as to what the behavioural trends communicated. This supported the secondary component of the analysis that explored, qualitatively, the nature and meaning of these initial findings as they related to the seminars fostering a climate of change.

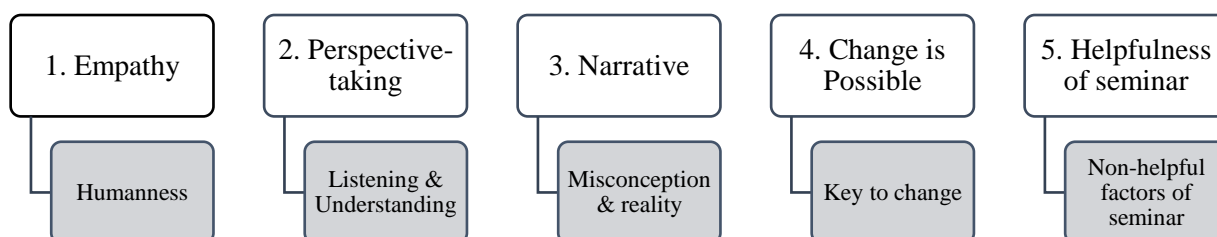
4.2.3 What aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful in fostering change?

This question was answered by a subjective interpretation of participants' experiences in two parts; first by exploring the content of text data provided through participants' evaluations on post-seminar open items, and secondly, by understanding the subjective experiences of participants in interviews approximately six months following the initial seminar (retrospective study). The interviews conducted with participants were largely informed by the outcomes identified within the content analysis, and therefore provided an opportunity to enhance understanding of helpful and unhelpful factors of the COME seminar experience.

To begin framing this research question, the following explores the outcomes of a *conventional content analysis* through a systematic process of coding and the categories and patterns that were identified (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). While it was expected that certain categories may appear from the data based on previous findings and questions asked (i.e. seeing the other as a human being), using pre-conceived categories were avoided, allowing for categories to flow naturally from the content of the data and where possible, "allow new insights to emerge" (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002 in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: p. 1279). Using software NVivo, the data was analysed, looking at the

relationships between words and phrases in participants' evaluations of each question; based on this analysis a series of subcategories were identified and organised into a smaller number of five key categories. Figure 4 (below) outlines how these were organised in a hierarchal structure:

Figure 4. Hierarchical structure of categories and sub-categories in the content analysis



1. EMPATHY

As one of the hypothesised categories in this analysis, empathy was derived as one of the key themes amongst participants' evaluations of their seminar experience. As previously defined, empathy is understood as the ability to understanding, share and communicate the feelings of another person. No more was this communicated by participants in their evaluations than when participants could understand and acknowledge that both themselves and the other came from a place of deep psychological pain, and as one participant described, "we are both suffering and want peace." For another participant, it was important recognise that, "for Jews it's the deep need for security that was deprived from us for thousands of years, and for Palestinians, it's the deep need for dignity and justice". The important underlying message connecting these statements was to understand the other and be more able to "considering their feelings".

1.1 Humanness

Similarly, the relationship with 'humanness' as a subcategory was drawn naturally from the data as participants communicated feeling a greater affiliation with the feelings of others and being able to recognise their human side. Meanwhile, the ability to recognise the uniqueness of the other, while sharing a common ground is inherent within this definition of humanness, while the frequency of words stemming from

‘human’ and ‘sharing’ (12 and 10 references respectively) were prevalent in the data. Several participants expressed views in relation to a collective humanness, with others adding, “despite our contradicting views”, “we have common grounds”, “we share the water, land, electricity...language” and “at the end we are all humans”. Overall, the evidence suggests that participants engaged in a humanising process in which they learned to see the other in a different way, with several references made to understanding others as “human beings” who “love to have fun”, with one participant observing, “when you put different people for a long time together they get to know each other and that helps breaking the previous image you had on them.” Furthermore, a fascinating finding extracted from the data revealed two participants who had passionately expressed, “I fell in love with the enemy!” While another observed, “I found friends...that gives me hope and fills my heart with care and love for the other side”. This demonstrates the extent to which participants could reach out, despite political barriers, to understand the other, and form a common ground in which friendships could be made with “the enemy”.

2. PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

While perspective-taking was a predicted behavioural outcome from actively participating in the COME seminar, its content within participants’ responses were naturally evident in the content of their responses—forming one of the key themes of this study. In this context, perspective-taking is defined as the ability to shift attention from one’s own world-view to consider and respect the perspective of another (Piaget, 1967 in Ackermann, 1996). The content of participants’ responses revolved largely around the wish to hear and consider the perspective of the other, while the notion of respect was also highly present amongst responses, even if that view was conflicting with their own: “respecting others’ perspectives”, “to respect and to be open-minded”. Participants abilities to consider a different world view and step outside of their own frame of reference was repeated in several words and phrases: “It taught me to look at the other side”, while the use of metaphor was also popular: “to see things from the other side's view and put myself in their shoes”, while another participant recalled, “it truly allowed me to put myself *in the others' shoes* and to identify with their life experiences”.

2.1 Listening & Understanding

The importance of listening to and understanding the other despite the political narrative, were the amongst the most frequently used phrases and words in relation to perspective-taking. This demonstrated the importance of these two processes in allowing participants to consider a different point of view, as one participant admitted: “these are real feelings that need a place.” The words, ‘listening’ and ‘understanding’ to the ‘other side’ were highly prevalent amongst responses (19, 31, 47 references respectively) with several phrases referring to both: “understanding other's point of view is important”, “listening to others carefully, to understand their perspective and learn more.” Through the process of listening and understanding, it appears that participants could *learn* and see aspects of the other in a new light: “I learned that most people want peace as much as I want it”, “I became more aware”, “more open-minded and better educated”. Meanwhile the content also drew references to understanding the varying complexity of the conflict as a collective concern: “I know and understand *our* situation in a much deeper way”, while another participant added, “people wanted to listen and share experiences, not only in regard to the conflict.”

3. NARRATIVE

While the categories in this analysis are interrelated, the concept of narrative rose naturally from the data as participants explored the importance of narrative to their own lives and that of the other. The meaning of narrative in this context refers to the ways in which individuals identify with and articulate life stories—a process which inevitably shapes the individual and who they are (McAdams, 2001). The implications of narrative are very much central to the lives of Israelis and Palestinians, whose varying cultural narrative shape the ways in which they form their identities and thus, their role in the conflict. Participants’ responses centred largely around the concept of the subjective narrative, appreciating the unique stories being told and the right of these stories to be heard and respected. While ‘narrative’ was referenced 8 times in the content of responses, participants made frequent reference to the importance of being “open-minded and willing to listen, learn and respect” the narratives of others. Appreciating that “the other might have a different narrative” was evident amongst responses, with phrases also referring to listening to the other side or to “seek to hear the other part of the story” in the context of the conflict. The concept

of 'stories' was referenced 11 times amongst responses, referring to the sharing of stories as a means of connecting more meaningfully and more personally to the other beyond the political narrative: "sharing your stories and experiences with someone who speaks a different language and comes from different backgrounds is beautiful and meaningful", meanwhile another participant recalled feeling "much more connected to the human aspect of the conflict - to the personal stories within the different national narratives—" reflecting the importance of the personal, individual and unique stories on both sides of the conflict line.

3.1 Misconception & Reality

As a unique sub-category, the concepts of misconception and reality arose through participants' explorations of narrative and in discovering a common thread not only in relation to the conflict - but also as human beings. Several key words and phrases arose from the content (i.e. 'government' - 6 references, 'politics' – 5 references), demonstrating the complex and evolving nature of the conflict and the ways in which participants could unearth the common misconceptions they held in relation to the other; as one participant recalled, "mistrust and suspiciousness take a very central role in the conflict, as well as misunderstanding". Furthermore, participants demonstrated the ability to differentiate the political from the personal: "the government's actions do not represent necessarily everyone's feelings and aims", while also observing, "only through this kind of human interaction could we build mutual trust and dissolve the calcified hate and preconceived notions of each other." Nevertheless, reality took on a different meaning for other participants who reflecting on life after the seminar observed, while the seminar "is very important on the personal level...I am not sure how much of an effect it has on a bigger political scale," demonstrating "the difficult reality" they return to at home in the context of the conflict.

4. CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Interestingly, the content revealed some of the highest frequency of words and phrases in relation to the concept of change and what this meant on the personal and systematic level for participants. 'Change' and all related stemmed words were referenced 28 times within the content, revealing several key phrases that exemplified the possibility of change in the context of participants' relationships with another in the context of the conflict: "as young adults we are the change and I believe that if we

are in one hand change is possible and peace is reachable”, “change is possible when a common ground is reached”. Despite the possibilities, the interplay between the personal and systematic level of change was also expressed: “I wish that educational change would happen back home to make the influence stronger”, while on the personal level one participant observed, “if we want to change society, we should start with ourselves first”. What arises from the content is a clear and collective message that change is desired and that participants express the willingness to contribute to solutions through meetings and forms of dialogue.

4.1 Key to change

Arising from the main category, *key to change* developed as an overriding message from participants’ evaluations of the key experiences, lessons or messages they would take home from the seminar. Returning the highest frequency of words and phrases in relation to solutions for change, words stemming from ‘meeting’ and ‘dialogue’ (i.e. talking, listening, conversation, discussion, communication) returned 20 and 76 references respectively. This appears to have demonstrated the impact and influence of dialogue within the seminar on participants’ perceptions of effective methods for change.

The importance of communication arose considerably from the content, returning 18 referenced sources. Maintaining dialogue and communication seemed evidently important for participants in their relationships with one another following the seminar: “Israelis and Palestinians HAVE to continue speaking with each other”, “I hope to continue the dialogue so that I can understand more on a deeper level what type of solution can move the situation forward”. The wider implications of communication were also extended to notions of language that are practiced within the respective communities, as one participant remarked, “we have a large effect on our friends and family - if we manage to change the language within them it can make a certain change”. Meanwhile, education also remained at the centre of improving communication as one participant observed, “understanding that listening and communicating and education are the *key for change*”.

Overall, the content revealed a strong sense of accountability in participants evaluations of their responsibility to encourage a different relationship with the *other side* within their respective communities: “to change my people's perspective about the other side”, “to share my experiences, and talk about possible solutions”, “work

on my community - talk about being more open, aware and willing to understand the other side”, while participants also expressed interest in supporting dialogue initiatives: “continue doing the seminar and dialogue in Jerusalem and/or Bethlehem”, “to try to make initiatives and participate in more seminars”, “try to make changes in my society toward a better way of living”. It is evident that the key lessons taken away were ones that the seminars had hoped to encourage, an improvement in the way participants related, not only to each other, but also within their respective communities.

5. HELPFULNESS OF SEMINAR

This category arose expectedly from the content in which participants gave their evaluations on the best and worst aspects of the seminar experience; nevertheless, the content provides meaningful insight into helpful and non-helpful factors that are relevant for evaluating the objectives of this kind of acquaintance seminar. The evaluation process allowed participants to reflect on specific aspects of the seminar that held personal meaning and facilitated a means of communicating with the other in a different way. Therefore, words and phrases with the most frequency related either, to specific bonding or “icebreaker” activities or the ways in which the seminar facilitated a means of “meeting new people and making new friendships”. Several participants evaluating the usefulness of specific activities could derive personal meaning from them: “blindfolded experience was strong...you are not only trusting somebody else with your life, but you are able to truly listen”; meanwhile the organisation of the seminar itself was also be viewed as personally meaningful: “the long periods of free time that were given between activities were, to my mind, critical and paramount to the success of the seminar as a whole. It gave everyone a chance to process their emotions”. In addition to having “free time”, activities such as hiking, group discussions (specifically one-to-one talks) and culture evenings, were also amongst the most referenced as useful experiences for participants in the seminar (5, 69, 25 references respectively).

The most useful aspects arising from the content of the evaluations related to the ways in which the seminar facilitated a meaningful way of “meeting new people”, and “getting to know the other” or “bond with the other”. Similarly, one participant recalled the importance of, “meeting new people and sharing stories and connecting with each other and finally becoming friends.” The impact of sharing experiences and

integrating with the other in a different way was also expressed by many, “in the sense that it allows people to hear the other side's story”, “gain a great experience and change perspectives about different things”, and “it opens the door for them [participants] to think and speak and exchange their ideas with the other side, and also learn from them.” Evidently, the seminar facilitated a distinctive means of communication that enhanced perspective, understanding and learning amongst participants “which otherwise you might not have encountered”.

5.1 Non-helpful factors of seminar

While the seminar was experienced as largely useful, it also necessary to evaluate what arose as the more unhelpful factors of the seminar experience. While participants experienced activities as meaningful and the seminar as “very well organised and thoughtfully exercised”, several of the responses referred to a “tight”, “strict”, “compressed” or “stressed programme” and “schedule” (3, 1, 1, 7, 4 references respectively). Remarking that there were “so many activities and not enough time”, frequent responses related to the lack of time given to “really digest” and reflect on activities i.e. “after-movie discussion, only because it was right afterwards... when you are emotionally stressed it is harder to understand logic, and another way of thinking.” Meanwhile others suggested the seminar “should be a little more personal and emotional, and less factual at times”.

While positive references to seminar organisers were observed, there were a presence of negative references made to the lack of professional conduct of “committee members” or “facilitators” (4 and 3 references respectively). As one participant expressed, while “it didn't happen many times...it was usually in the form of interjecting with their own opinion about a topic that was being discussed or commenting on the CONTENT of a remark by one of the participants”; while another observed the need for “appropriate committee members”, it appeared important that “their role as impartial discussion leaders is crucial for the participants feeling of safety and trust within dialogues” and that this be demonstrated more explicitly in the future.

Overall, this analysis introduced a working perspective on participants experiences of the seminar, evaluating in words their evaluations of the seminar. However, to provide a more a rich understanding of participants lived experiences, it

was necessary to carry a retrospective follow-up study to understand their perspective in the months following the seminar. Therefore, the interviews conducted with participants were meaningfully informed by their previous evaluations and the resulting content analysis. The following section reports on these valuable findings and their subsequent impact on the aims of this study.

4.3 Retrospective study: final analysis

This section demonstrates the analysis that was carried out through the retrospective 6-month follow-up study. Therefore, interpretive phenomenological analysis was conducted on four COME seminar participants' subjective accounts to address the research question: "what aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful in fostering change?" Five master themes were identified (see: table 8) that summarise both their experience of the seminar and subsequent lived experience in the six months following initial participation. While the following is a faithful representation of participants experiences, it is important to note that this offers one of several possible interpretative stances.

Table 6. Master themes and subthemes for the group

Master Theme 1	Master Theme 2	Master Theme 3	Master Theme 4	Master Theme 5
Managing Friendships	Barriers	Transformation	Power and Futility	Reflection
Subthemes				
1.1 Fragility of friendship	2.1 Presence of divide as hard to ignore	3.1 Self and other	4.1 Reconciliation and reality	5.1 Seeing differently (conflict)
1.2 Co-existence	2.2 Impact of social identity	3.2 Transformation as a whole (change)	4.2 Confidence and security as problematic	5.2 Questioning reality
1.3 Hope and meaning	2.3 Overcoming barriers: sharing common ground	3.3 Language		

1. Managing Friendships

The first of the master themes highlights the managing of friendship as experienced by participants before, during and following the seminar. The three subsequent sub-themes demonstrate the process of managing cross-cultural friendships in an uncertain reality, and secondly, the sense of hope and meaning these friendships bring despite this.

1.1 Fragility of Friendship

Amongst reports, the fragility of friendship remained a key feature in participants' efforts to navigate relations with those in the other group. In the following extract, Rachel¹ reflects on challenges of establishing genuine relationships with Palestinians at home:

“Even if you do meet...²I teach Palestinian women Hebrew we would never have these conversations because you don't want to. You don't want to touch these hard feelings” (p.12/636-641).³

Demonstrating the hard reality in which lives, Rachel describes her experience of feeling unable to open genuine dialogue with Palestinians at home. This representing a sense of fragility, establishing friendships prove challenging within a context that reminds each participant of the sensitive and emotionally charged reality of their conflict relationship.

Meanwhile, in their respective encounters with others at the seminar, Adam and Emaan describe a notable dichotomy as they begin to form tentative friendships:

“They would say, Zahra, ‘why do you hang out with Adam he's a Zionist’ ...but on the other side they say that I'm the funniest from the Israeli group and they like me the most. So, they didn't know how to...accept me, they were divided between themselves” (Adam, Israeli; p.17-18/952-955).

¹ Pseudonyms given to participants to protect privacy and confidentiality

² Key to notation: to aid readability of extracts ... indicate omission of non-relevant material; (...) indicates a link to another section in the same transcript; [text] indicates explanatory text added by researcher; in-quote single quotation marks indicate participants citing what other individuals have said; utterances such “like”, “erm”, minor pauses and repetitions are removed.

³ Indicates location of quote within original transcript: (page number/line numbers)

“You love them you care about them, but in the same time what they believe in is totally different than what you believe in” (Emaan, Palestinian; p.2/71-75).

Experience of this dichotomy appeared to perpetuate itself across all participants lived accounts, indicating a tension between the prevailing conflict relationship and the new-found connection which they have established in the context of the seminar. For instance, feelings of frustration arise from Emaan’s reference to “what they believe in” as “totally different”, yet the feelings of affection evoked by having met ‘the other’⁴ on a more personal level demonstrate a conflicting tension in managing these relationships. Meanwhile, Adam experiences a similar tension through his friendship with Zahra as the Palestinian group are “divided between themselves” concerning his political identity while being liked as the “funniest from the Israeli group”.

Additionally, the concept of loss was a dominant characteristic of the fragility of friendship as felt by Mohammed, who described the emotional impact of a friendship with an Israeli participant from the seminar:

“We kept in touch for three months after the seminar. But now we don't talk at all...it's not cool for me because he used to be a really good friend” (p.2-3/87-93).

The fragility of friendship is felt acutely in the light of Mohammed’s lived experience, who having forged a meaningful friendship with an Israeli participant– finds it hard to articulate his experience of loss. Meanwhile, previously speaking of the divide that exist between them, Mohammed depicts one of the key challenges to managing relationships across conflict lines. Overall, the tensions experienced by each participant is illustrative of the struggle to maintain such fragile relationships in the context of conflict.

1.2 Co-existence

Related to the previous subtheme, the concept of coexistence was a key component to participants’ views of negotiating and managing friendship with ‘the other’.

⁴ Referred to in inverted comas, ‘the other’ and ‘the other side’ is used by participants to describe members of the other group, while the notion and meaning of these expressions is also discussed in the context of their lived experience.

The ability to live peacefully side-by-side appeared to resonate in unexpected ways, as Rachel observed, “we could hang out all the groups together” (p.13/698-699), while Adam’s assertion, “I believe it's up to the people, it's up to co-existence”, highlighted a sense of responsibility to uphold and manage friendship (p.15/826-827).

Meanwhile, Emaan and Mohammed reflected on the importance of humanity in relation to managing relationships:

“At the end of arguments, we are humans. (...) When you discover these things, you can build or construct a base...you can build something on that base that can go up and up and up” (Mohammed; p.8/431 and p.8/436-441).

“We were just there as humans and I figured out that we can live together if we want to, if we just hear the other side and try to understand. (...) It's OK to have a different point of view with someone and still be friends as long as you respect them” (Emaan; p.14/762-767 and p.15/796-799).

Both Emaan and Mohammed appear to recognise a sense of humanness that they share with ‘the other’, with both reflecting on the importance of building “on that base”— co-existence may be possible “if we want to”. Reflecting on the importance of respect as a base on which to build on, Emaan reflects on the opportunity to see through differences “and still be friends”, demonstrating that it is possible to disagree and yet maintain positive regard for ‘the other’. Effectively these reflections demonstrate the prospects of co-existence, all of which begin with the fundamental realisation that “we are humans” and “not as ‘the other’ or as an enemy” (Emaan; p.3/126-127).

1.3 Hope and Meaning

A sense of hope and meaning was palpable amongst participants’ experiences of friendship with the other group. Below, Adam, Mohammed, and Emaan reflect on the experience in a heart-warming and meaningful manner:

“It really opened my mind also my heart to people from the other side who want to end the conflict. (...) If there's a solution or there's let's say reconciliation... Maybe I can explore these relationships” (Mohammed; p.12/628-631 and p.7/339-342).

“This was like one of the biggest if not the biggest...most influential experience that I had in my life. (...) I found myself in my room playing to four Palestinians with the guitar and we're all singing and we had fun” (Adam; p.2/95-99 and p.17/927-931)

“Away of the eye away of the heart, but when you know someone [*from the other group*] you can't just say I don't care” (Emaan; p.1/23-26).

Emphasising his emotions through opening “my mind also my heart”, Mohammed demonstrated the impact of meeting and getting to know ‘the other’ in allowing him to learn that they also share his desire to “end the conflict”. In turn this facilitates a sense of hope in reconciliation as he reflected on the possibility to “explore these relationships” in the future. Similarly, Adam’s description of his experience as “one of the biggest” and “most influential” demonstrates the personal meaning of his encounter with the others. Admitting to being an outspoken member of his group, this was juxtaposed by an intimate moment in which he could connect with the Palestinians through music. Meanwhile, reflecting on her process, Emaan has taken the expression, “away of the eye away of the heart” and transformed it’s meaning through her experience of meeting and knowing ‘the other’. Admitting, “you can’t just say I don’t care”, it now appears that in fact, ‘distance makes the heart grow fonder’.

The value of reciprocity within friendship was also reflected as a meaningful experience; Rachel describes an instance in which crossing illegal boundaries to visit friends was felt as both powerful and personally meaningful:

“I went to her house [in Bethlehem] once and she came over to mine and I think that idea...that she could come here and...she feels comfortable enough coming. And I feel comfortable enough going to her house, it's important for me. I think that shows a lot...I didn't feel like I could do that before” (Rachel; p.11/577-587).

The idea of being able to visit friends from the ‘other side’ signalled a meaningful change for Rachel, feeling “comfortable enough going to her house” feels important, and admitting, “I didn’t feel like I could do that before— demonstrates a powerful transition in her own personal capabilities to develop relationally.

Overall, participants' experiences of friendship appear to have increased awareness and curiosity about the other group. As participants take an interest in the

experience and life of ‘the other’, the reality of how to navigate these relationships and co-exist in a culture of conflict becomes the most important question in the context of their lived experience.

2. Barriers

This master theme highlighted participants’ experiences of living with barriers. The first subtheme addresses participants’ perception of barriers as a prevailing divide made not only by the Israeli-West Bank barrier itself, while the subsequent two subthemes explore the socio-cultural implications of these in the context of participants’ lives.

2.1 Presence of divide as hard to ignore

Reflecting on their experiences around the seminar, participants often described the prevailing presence of a divide beyond that of the separation wall built between Israel and the Palestinian territories since 2002 (Klein, 2005). As highlighted by the following references:

“We felt like as Israelis we're not allowed to walk into that into the space when it was the two groups together” (Rachel; p.7/361-364).

“All the personal aspects vanished away when they see me as an Israeli. They don't see the fact that I have someone I love and I care about...They don't see the human side of me” (Adam; p.9/451-457).

The accounts given by Rachel and Adam summarise the existence of a divide that prevails not only by the presence of a physical barrier, but that which exists invisibly, preventing them from walking into the spaces inhabited by the other group— despite being outside the context of conflict. Meanwhile, Adam reflects on the existence of a barrier that causes “the personal aspects” to vanish— the characteristics of being human that are otherwise unseen beyond the political lens. Concluding emphatically, “they don’t see the human side of me”, the statement resonates deeply as he reflects on the sobering reality in which his identity as a human being cannot always be seen beyond that of an enemy.

Interestingly, anthropomorphism is evident in the following examples, as Emaan and Mohammed reflect on their experience of a divide:

“This is what the wall wanted. It's like when the Israelis built the wall they separated two nations” (Emaan; p.1/46-49).

“I'm a Palestinian who lives in the West Bank and there's something that prevents me to preserve this relationship between us” (Mohammed; p.2-3/107-112).

Stating, “this is what the wall wanted”, Emaan appears to imbue the wall with humanlike characteristics, motivations and intentions—referring to what she feels it has done to separate “two nations” (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). Similarly, Mohammed refers indirectly to “something that prevents” him preserving his relationship, perhaps referring to the wall as more than a divide between nations, but a prevailing reminder that friendship is threatened by an “ancient grudge” (Shakespeare, 1893: p.2).

2.2 Impact of social identity

In the context of conflict, participants often reflected on the impact of group identity on their perceptions of ‘the other’. Contingent on the group’s beliefs, values and goals, the impact of social identity is experienced in different ways by both groups of participants (Korostelina, 2007). The following extracts describe the perspective as seen by Israeli participants, Rachel and Adam:

“The Palestinian side it felt like they really are trying to create this one idea” (Rachel; p.8/415-417).

“In the Palestinian side, it was ‘we have to be united against them’ maybe because they see themselves as a minority and someone who's fighting for his basic rights” (Adam; p.7/367-372).

In her observation, Rachel raised a question regarding the Palestinian motive “to create this one idea”; where observed from a social perspective, this indicates the importance of the group’s shared values in maintaining the salience of their identity and group boundaries, therefore resulting in a motive to position themselves, united, as “one idea” (Bar-Tal, 1998). Similarly, Adam observed that “in the Palestinian side”, the need “to be united” is reflective of a struggle “as a minority...fighting for his basic rights”. As such, the centrality of the Palestinian identity was emphasised as Rachel and Adam

observed a sense of fragility in need to protect themselves from the perceived threat of disintegration.

Meanwhile, Palestinians Emaan and Mohammed reflected on the impact of their own identities on their everyday lives:

“You see how much confidence they have like how much they're so confident that their state is protecting them...Palestinians don't have the same confidence” (Emaan; p.11/604-610).

“When I tell them that they are civilians, like they are humans... Why do you support killing or hurting people that are like you?’ They think that like I'm not a Palestinian or I have different views” (Mohammed; p.6/279-286).

Emaan’s perception of the Israelis as “confident that their state is protecting them”, appears to provide a regretful acknowledgment of the lack of safety and security she feels as a Palestinian. This juxtaposed with the Israeli perception of the Palestinians as united, Emaan painted a sobering image of the reality in which she lives, lacking trust and confidence in the state she calls her home.

Similarly, Mohammed experienced a difficult time negotiating his own identity when he returned home to his Palestinian friends. A process of interrogation occurred for him– as if opening his eyes, “why do you support killing or hurting people that are like you?” This now seems hard for him to contemplate as he battles with the notion that he is no longer Palestinian for having “different views” to those of his own people.

2.3 Overcoming barriers: sharing common ground

While participants explored the notion of barriers as ‘a divide hard to ignore’, they could also reflect on the opportunities to overcome boundaries through the common ground they shared. In the examples below, Rachel and Adam reflect on what it meant for them to share common ground with ‘the other’:

“Just like me, we had something in our thoughts and the way our parents think...that was very interesting and I felt so close to them in ways that I couldn't be as close to them in other topics” (Rachel; p.5/260-266).

“I was the one responsible for the Palestinian present so we bought these seeds...representing the common ground that we both had and the connection to the ground we have. (...) We even arranged a regroup several months after that. And the Palestinians came which was really surprising” (Adam; p.18/991-999 and p.21/1159-1163).

These examples demonstrate a profound moment through which both Rachel and Adam experience feelings they did not expect in relation to ‘the other’. Admitting that it “was very interesting” to feel “so close to them”, Rachel finds it interesting to find that they are more alike than she thought. Similarly, Adam reflects on the significance of the gift to the Palestinians as representing the common ground which they share through “the connection to the ground”. This seems to resonate deeply with a desire for peace by emphasising what they share over that which divides them. Meanwhile, Adam also reflected on a sense of surprise when participants “arranged a regroup” following the seminar, admitting “it was really successful because there was common ground still”. This appears to highlight the importance of shared belonging not only to the land, but to each other as human beings. This is emphasised by the extracts given below:

“The conversations we had about life...about our hobbies, about everything not only about the conflict. Because when I conversed with...someone from the other side I realised that we really have something in common, we at the end of arguments, we are humans” (Mohammed; p.8/422-432).

“At some point, you just forget that the person in front of you is, how do I say it between brackets...‘enemy’, I don’t like to use this word but...you just forget it and you start dealing with this person as a human just like you, and not as ‘the other’ or as an enemy” (Emaan; p.3/118-127).

Through various forms of dialogue, Mohammed reflected on the opportunity to talk not only about conflict, but “about life” and the ways in which this could facilitate getting to know ‘the other’. In finding common ground through dialogue, the impact could be felt as Mohammed admitted, “at the end of arguments, we are humans”. Through Emaan, we witness something profound about her experience as she shifted her focus to “dealing with this person as a human being...not as ‘the other’ or as an enemy”.

Furthermore, her reluctance to use the word ‘enemy’ is symptomatic of a change she has experienced in her perceptions of the other group that is meaningful and significant.

3. Transformation

This master theme explored the broad behavioural change that participants described in the light of their experiences at the seminar. Here, change is understood as a transformation not only in one’s own self, but also how participants perceived the other group; meanwhile, the experience of change in the general context was also explored as a subtheme. Finally, the transformation of language and how participants used language to transform meaning in the context of ‘the other’ and the conflict was also explored as a third subtheme.

3.1 Self and other

In the first subtheme, the participants reflected on a transformation in their thoughts, images and feelings about themselves in relation to the other. There is an overriding sense of surprise as participants explore these themes in relation to their encounter with the other group:

“First [changes] in my thoughts and feelings, like things I thought that were really clear to me before, changed. (...) I was surprised that it affected me that much” (Rachel; p.2/103-106 and p.3/136-137).

“When you get to know someone, it gets you to change your feelings. So, after we went back home we had this fire that went all over Israel...No one really knows who lit it up, but it was good that at least I thought about someone who I care about on the other side” (Emaan; p.1/6-17).

Reflecting on a change in feelings, both Rachel and Emaan appear to express an unexpected reaction from their encounter with the other group. Admitting, “I was surprised that it affected me that much”, Rachel highlights a significant transformation in thoughts and feelings that seemed “really clear to me before”. Emaan also remarks on being able to think about someone “I care about on the other side”, demonstrating the experience of meeting and getting to know ‘the other’ as facilitating a process of change in one’s own thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Similarly, Mohammed remarks on a very

deep change in self, one which he finds hard to articulate in detail as he observes his ability to relinquish himself from fear in relation to ‘the other’:

“In the past, maybe I felt that like I'm afraid or something, but now...I'm not afraid anymore because ‘I know who you are. I know why you're here in the checkpoint’...Something changed. Maybe it's something physically but maybe more emotionally” (Mohammed; p.1-2/50-65).

Observing his feelings as he passes through the checkpoints, “I know who you are” imbues a more personal characteristic to the soldiers he encounters. As if giving ‘the other’ a more human face, Mohammed demonstrates the development of greater awareness. Furthermore, finding it challenging to articulate how “something changed”, also reflects perhaps a deeper change in self that has taken place as he relinquishes a fear of the unknown in relation to ‘the other’.

Meanwhile, Adam reflects on a change in his own perceptions as he discusses an important dichotomy:

“It's not them and us anymore. It's like kids and kids...I don't like this dichotomy, black and white point of view, everything is much more complex than we can understand” (Adam; p.14-15/778-793).

Departing from “them and us”, Adam attempts to bridge a gap between both sides of the conflict, establishing a shared sense of responsibility. Remarking poignantly, “it's like kids and kids”, Adam draws on several traditional dichotomies as he compares the conflict to child's play. As he questions these, there is a process of interrogation; remarking, that “everything is much more complex that we can understand”. Here, Adam demonstrates a prevailing complexity regarding change and reconciliation, admitting: “until we want to do this change...we won't be able to fix anything” (p.15/794-796).

3.2 Transformation as a whole (change)

In this second subtheme, participants reflected on the broader context of change resulting from their experiences in the seminar. Participants expressed an overall transformation in their lived experience of the conflict and the ways in which this changed their worldview:

“I had very strong opinions about the conflict, about our life here. I had a way of thinking of this whole situation and it changed a lot” (Rachel; p.2-3/104-110).

“We would draw the number six on a paper. And then you can see it from both sides. From a side, it's nine from the other side it's six, and it's the same, the whole conflict is the same...Each sees it from a different perspective. That's why we have the war” (Emaan; p.5/255-266).

“To look for more personal feelings more personal point of view and not a political point of view not a national point of view. This is what changed the most” (Adam; p.14/765-769).

Here, both Rachel and Emaan reflected on change as they discussed the ways in which their “way of thinking” transformed and allowed them to see the conflict “from a different perspective”. For Emaan, the group task completed at the seminar seemed to have resonated deeply as a metaphor for the conflict; allowing her to “see it from both sides”, the conflict itself reflects one problem, one land and one people. Furthermore, while her experience highlights the sobering realisation of “why we have the war”, her feelings demonstrated a renewed way of perceiving the problem. Similarly, reflecting on what “changed the most”, Adam learned to disconnect from the political and consider a “more personal point of view” – highlighting the human side to the conflict.

Meanwhile, Mohammed reflected on the impact of the seminar experience as he looked closer to home:

“My opinions towards Palestinians is that I feel sorry...But I really feel sorry that they have not experienced a seminar like COME seminar because it is really life changing in many ways” (Mohammed; p.9/464-472).

Interestingly, Mohammed expressed feelings of sympathy towards fellow Palestinians, understanding their point of view as shaped by a different experience in comparison to his own. Therefore, reflecting on the COME seminar as “really life changing in so many ways”, Mohammed emphasises the profound and complex emotions involved, highlighting the tension he experiences living with a renewed perspective amongst in peers at home.

3.3 Language

Language and the transformation of meaning was a decisive way in which participants experienced a change in relation to ‘the other’. The opportunity to encounter the uses of language in the context of the seminar, appeared to have transformed the ways in which participants not only viewed the conflict, but how they understood the other group:

“You see that you and the other side are not really an ‘other side’ and...you are just imaginary lines that don't really exist in reality...there is no such thing. Nationality is something that is in our minds” (Adam; p.9/472-478)

“I always heard when I was small...if you want to beat your enemy you should know his language. Now I think about this, if I want to understand the other side I should know their language. (...) That was helpful enough for making me not feeling afraid anymore when I hear the Hebrew language” (Emaan; p.9/479-485 and p.10/508-512).

Here, Adam interrogates the meaning of ‘the other’, of nationality itself and the language used to create “imaginary lines that don’t really exist”. In questioning what this means, Adam highlights the ways in which language creates divide, emphasising nationality as a figment of imagination that prevents seeing the other as a human being. Similarly, Emaan explains her own experience of transformation through language; idioms she was familiar with from a young age are understood from a renewed perspective in the light of her encounter with the Hebrew language. From understanding language as a tool “to beat your enemy”, Emaan has transformed the use of Hebrew as a means “to understand the other side”. In turn learning Hebrew has helped Emaan demystify her fears and increase her confidence in relation to ‘the other’.

Meanwhile, Rachel and Mohammed reflect on their views of the conflict and the ways in which dialogue have transformed these images:

“The second I met people I started talking about it [the conflict] in a different way so...it was easy for it to change” (Rachel; p.3/119-122)

“Conflict is not just about confiscating lands or stealing lands. Conflict is more about feelings, it's about many things. Conflict is a huge word” (Mohammed; p.9-10/498-504).

Reflecting on an openness to change, Rachel demonstrates the ease in which she could begin talking about the conflict “in a different way”—facilitated by the means of meeting ‘the other’ and engaging in open dialogue. Similarly, Mohammed reflects on his own experience of transforming meaning as he explores beyond traditional definitions of conflict; demonstrating that conflict is more than “confiscating lands”, Mohammed recognises the deeper and more complex nature of conflict that cannot be understood without recognising human needs and emotions.

4. Power and Futility

The fourth master theme highlights contextual challenges participants reported in their abilities to negotiate issues of power in relation to the future of the conflict. The following subthemes address the confrontation of reality following the seminar, highlighting issues relating to reconciliation; and, secondly, the experience of confidence and security as problematic.

4.1 Reconciliation and reality

In this subtheme, participants reflect on confronting the reality of conflict, and following their participation in the seminar— how the concept of a reconciliation or resolution with the ‘other side’ is perceived in the face of their lives experiences returning home.

Below, Rachel and Emaan highlight the social concept of normalization⁵ and the ways in which they experience this as a challenging obstacle towards reconciliation:

““No way are we going to have a meeting up after...because that's normalization, that's going to make this whole situation as if this is fine, let's just be friends’...I get that...But it just felt so annoying we’re trying” (Rachel; p.19/1030-1039).

“We say it's Palestinian Authority. They made it up [normalisation] to prevent Palestinians from talking to the other side, just as the wall. Normalization for me equals the wall” (Emaan; p.14/729-734).

⁵ *Normalization* is a social process through which ideas and standards of behaviour define the norm in everyday life (Gore, 2001). In the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it is a political term referring to the normalizing of relations between both sides without placing as its goal resistance to and relinquishing of what is viewed as the Israeli occupation of Palestine (Mi’Ari, 1999).

Here, Ruth highlights the issue of normalization in the context of her lived experience. Reflecting on life outside the seminar Rachel is confronted by the Palestinians resistance to and fear of forging friendship back at home. The fear that this may 'normalize' relations and "make this whole situation as if this is fine" demonstrates an integral conflict that is faced by both sides in relation to the prospect of reconciliation. Struggling to break through the resistance proved evidently difficult in Ruth's experience, creating a sense of the conflict as psychologically complex. Interestingly, normalization took a different meaning for Emaan, who by questioning the source of its origin, saw normalization as a means of preventing a somewhat calculated divide by the Palestinian authorities. Symbolically stating, "normalization for me equals the wall", Emaan seems to be referring to an uncomfortable reality in which she lives, whereby normalization threatens to become the dividing line between conflict and resolution.

Meanwhile, Adam and Mohammed describe their experience of futility in the face of political obstacles, highlighting the impact of these on the prospect of reconciliation:

"If there was any leadership in the other side that can build and sustain a healthy country or state I would be open to a state solution. But as I see it right now. It's really a shame that they don't" (Adam; p.16-17/892-898).

"The feasibility of the things that we talked about in the seminar. Maybe if you think about it...would I construct the solutions that we had here in Palestine? I don't think so because (...) you're not empowered to enforce these things on the ground" (Mohammed; p.14/746-753 and p.14/771-773).

The want and desire for a solution is evident as both Adam and Mohammed reflect on the prospect of reconciliation. However, concerns over political motivation and lack of power appear to prevail in Adam's lived experience as he ascertains that "it's really a shame they don't" – referring to the lack of sustainable authority and agreement over a state solution. Similarly, Mohammed's account demonstrates a distinct example of the futility he experiences, questioning "the feasibility of things" discussed in the seminar and their ability to actualise change in the context of the conflict. Expressing his doubts, Mohammed addresses the question of whether it is possible to achieve change if "you're not empowered to enforce these things", challenging the lack of power and influence that people "on the ground" possess in the face of political authority.

4.2 Confidence and security as problematic

This subtheme addressed a very real aspect of participants' lived experiences relating to a sense confidence and security that they are both supported and protected by their state. This is highlighted in two ways: firstly, an experienced lack of confidence over safety and, secondly, the lack of confidence that their rights are upheld and protected.

“[Palestinians] They're scared...because of this big brother that's always there watching which was terrifying to feel that...our nation is the Big Brother that makes it impossible for them to even have a normal conversation...We could actually feel that in the room” (Rachel; p.8/422-432).

“They made a follow-up meeting in Jerusalem and they wanted me to be there. I wanted to be there. But at the same time, I didn't want to go, because I don't think it is a safe place to meet up and discuss things about the conflict especially here, in Israel or Palestine” (Mohammed; p.10/532-542).

As Rachel reflects on a sobering discussion with the Palestinians, she could relate empathically, admitting, “it was terrifying to feel that...our nation is the Big Brother”. The experience of encountering this response appeared to astonish Rachel, realising with a heavy heart that, “we could actually feel that in the room”. There appeared to be something important about coming to this understanding and being able to empathise with the feelings of the other Palestinian group and their fears of lacking security. Similarly, Mohammed reflects on a conflicting experience of emotions as he admitted, “I wanted to be there. But at the same time, I didn't want to go”. Experience conflicting feelings over his safety, Mohammed seemed to indicate a sense of his overall experience following the seminar, admitting several times to “mixed feelings” (p.2/101, p.3/113-114, p.4/184). As Mohammed admits to feeling unable to make the follow-up meeting, there seems to be something very challenging emotionally going on for him despite the valuable experiences he had portrayed.

Meanwhile, in giving accounts of their own lived experiences, both Adam and Emaan reflect on the issues they encountered in relation to feelings of confidence:

“Most of the Palestinians wonder if they will be offered right now blue ID...because the Palestinian leadership do not have the ability to take care of their rights and are actually violating their rights themselves” (Adam; p.16/879-888).

“You see how much confidence they have like how much they're so confident that their state is protecting them. And I don't like, Palestinians don't have the same confidence” (Emaan; p.11/604-610)

While reflecting on their experiences from two seemingly different sides, Adam and Emaan demonstrated a shared understanding that Palestinians appear to feel regarding their authority. Observing that, “the Palestinian leadership do not have the ability to take care of their rights”, Adam portrays a huge socio-political narrative around the costs of the conflict and its impact on people’s rights and freedoms. Similarly, Emaan laments the sense of confidence that Israelis possess in their leadership admitting, they’re so confident that their state is protecting them...Palestinians don’t have the same confidence”; this realisation seems deeply impacting as Emaan experiences a reality in which security and confidence is lacking.

5. Reflection

In this final master theme, participants could reflect on their lived experiences following the seminar in a way that allowed them to reintegrate into daily life seeing things in a significantly new light. While this is a process by which all participants enter when giving accounts of their lived experience, participants in this study appeared to reflect on life following the seminar in a very thought provoking and interrogative manner. This gives rise to the following subthemes, in which participants reflected on seeing the notion of ‘the other’ differently, while also beginning to question the reality they had always known.

5.1 Seeing differently

As a subtheme, ‘seeing differently’ emphasises participants overall experience of the seminar and their lived experiences in the months following. Seeing differently is a process by which participants have demonstrated an ability to develop from their notion of ‘the other’, while learning to step outside of their worldview of the conflict and open their eyes to a renewed perspective. Below, Emaan and Mohammed reflect upon another way of seeing ‘the other’ in the context of their everyday lives:

“Whenever I want to go to Israel they come pick me from my house by their car even though it's illegal for them, they take the risk...And I find that very brave because Palestinians have always the stereotype about Israelis that they're cowards...And they said it in the seminar...we are not cowards we would risk for you because we love you and we want you to be our friend” (Emaan; p.11/557-574).

“Now I see, I differentiate between people who live in Israel as civilians and people who are recruited now like in the army. I see all of them as humans” (Mohammed; p.3/132-137).

In this moment, Emaan reflects on the personal meaning of being cared for by her Israeli friends. Experiencing them “take the risk”, of willing to cross conflict lines “even though it’s illegal” is a power means through which she can surpass her perceptions of “the enemy” (p.8/440) and shatter “the stereotype about Israelis”. Admitting, “we would risk for you because we love you”, demonstrates a powerful example of bravery that is both meaningful and resonating in context of Emaan’s life. Similarly, Mohammed demonstrates making a distinction in the identity of ‘the other’. Admitting, “I see all of them as humans”, Mohammed steps outside his own frame of reference to perceive the ‘otherness of the other’ – proving that there is more to the Israeli identity than that of an enemy.

Meanwhile, reflecting on their own lived experience, Rachel and Adam observe the changes in their perception of the conflict and its relationship to their understanding ‘the other’:

“They feel very, very disconnected to the country and to their own people. So that really made me understand how the problem is bigger and how the whole Palestinian identity is very divided” (Rachel; p.6/322-329).

“People used to co-exist more. So, it changed my perspective about the timeline, even that small experience influenced me to research more and to find out that the conflict was not always like it is now” (Adam; p.12/641-648).

Experiencing dialogue with the other group has facilitated a new perspective, giving both Rachel and Adam the opportunity to hear a different story and “understand

how the problem is bigger”. The realisation feels profound for both, somewhat sad, as Adam adds, “people used to co-exist more”; a change in perspective has allowed them both to see the conflict and the lived experience of Palestinians in a new-found light – even influencing Adam to do further research and broaden his understanding. Furthermore, Rachel’s perception that the “Palestinian identity is very divided” demonstrates a complex picture of the conflict and its impact on lived experiences.

5.2 Questioning reality

This last subtheme refers to participants experiences of reflexivity, as they began a process of critical reflection on their lived experience of the conflict. Participants not only began to interrogate what they thought they knew, but also appeared to go through a process of questioning the self in relation to their experience, as demonstrated in the examples below:

“It's mixed feelings. I don't know if I changed or I don't know if it is bad to change, or it is okay to feel that change” (Mohammed; p.4/184-187).

“I still have this insistence of getting to know more about the other side. I haven’t changed my political orientation or my political perspective - no, but just giving myself the chance to understand why do they think that. Why do they do this?” (Emaan; p.10/526-536).

For Mohammed, a process of questioning the self appeared to indicate mixed feelings as there is something quite challenging going on for him emotionally. Unsure of whether “it is bad to change, or it is okay”, Mohammed appears to be experiencing a process of internal questioning about the meaning of change and possibly what this means in the context of his identity as a Palestinian. Similarly, Emaan reflects that while the experience has given her the “insistence of getting to know more about the other side”, this leaves her critically reflecting on the reality of her identity as a Palestinian located within the context of the conflict. Nevertheless, her curiosity “to know more” allows her “the chance to understand why” – therefore facilitating opportunity for further reflexivity.

Meanwhile, Ruth and Adam demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on their beliefs in relation to aspects of their daily life in the context of the conflict:

“I can't go to Bethlehem or to Ramallah or to Bishkek, because it's illegal. But then I think that's a big thing that changed, the whole idea of what's law, what's legal...who are the people that decide what's legal?” (Rachel; p.23-24/1225-1232).

“You listen to stories of Palestinian friends that talk about their friends being arrested and you begin to suspect...this is where I began things... I need to be more creative in my critical thinking...and to figure it out for myself” (Adam; p.4/170-185).

Here, Rachel reflects on the deeper changes in thoughts and feelings as she appears to interrogate the law itself– “the whole idea of what’s law, what’s legal”. Despite emphasis of the law, this now appears obsolete in the light of her lived experience having travelled into Bethlehem for her Palestinian friends. Furthermore, emphasis on “the people that decide what’s legal” demonstrates a great deal of the questioning self and Rachel’s perceptions of truth, as this highlights the question: has reality now changed? The impact of these thoughts marks a profound moment for Rachel as she reflects on a different reality. Similarly, the impact of listening to his “Palestinian friends” appears to have triggered a process of questioning reality in which Adam insist on a “need to be more creative in my critical thinking”. Adam appears to highlight the importance of not only developing greater reflexivity, but of questioning one’s own beliefs in the quest for truth.

To summarise, these findings highlight how the acquaintance seminar held between Palestinian and Israeli participants in Cyprus enabled them to see ‘the other’ as a human being, transforming their images of the other group as an enemy. Understanding this not only from a statistical point of view, but through participants lived experiences, both groups experienced a meaningful degree of change in their behaviours six months following the seminar, demonstrating changes in their daily life and interactions with members of the other group. Nonetheless, the limitations of these changes in the context of the prevailing conflict were identified and are further explored in the following chapter, alongside the implications of these findings in relation to the core literature.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter Overview

This doctoral thesis was conducted on the COME acquaintance seminars, with its aim to explore their impact on behaviour, while raising awareness of the importance of group reconciliation programmes. As a result, this chapter will explore the key aims of the study, discussing how these were answered and the implications of the obtained findings. The primary research questions focus on the following: have the COME seminars brought about *behavioural change*? And what aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful and not helpful in fostering change?

Statistical analysis was conducted to identify primarily, changes in participants' perceptions and behaviour toward one another on three standardised scales (global empathy, openness to the other and intergroup reconciliation). The statistics showed that while behaviour change from pre-to-post measure was statistically non-significant, an observable change in means across the three subscales indicated a promising trend towards a change in behaviour. Thus, to gain a more detailed insight into the meaning of these findings, content analysis was carried on open items within participants' evaluations of the seminar, highlighting three key objectives of the programme. Firstly, participants showed a capacity to empathise with feelings of 'the other' and see them as human beings. Secondly, this is demonstrated by participants' abilities to listen to and consider the other's perspective, therefore developing perspective-taking skills. Thirdly, the concept of change as a realistic possibility despite the general complexities of the protracted conflict. Within this analysis, participants also explore the helpful and non-helpful aspects of the seminar and the ways these are perceived as fostering a climate of change.

Meanwhile, The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) that was conducted with four seminar participants accounts highlight five key areas in which the seminar was helpful and not helpful in fostering change. Principally, participants experience of managing friendships and the experience of barriers as dynamic forces of change. Additionally, the experience of transforming images, thoughts, and feelings of themselves in relation to the other, and the impact of power on their abilities to actualise change in their daily lives. Ultimately, participants reflect on the general contextual

challenges of living with a renewed perspective and the ways in which this has influenced them to question the reality of the conflict and wherein they locate themselves. This chapter will also discuss the wider implications of these findings in the context of counselling psychology and the contribution of these findings to future reconciliation initiatives. Meanwhile, the use of mixed methods will be evaluated in relation to its benefits and challenges highlighted in chapter three and my process of reflexivity will also be explored. Finally, suggestions for future research and a summarising conclusion of the contribution of this research to knowledge will also be provided.

5.2 Key Findings in relation to the Literature

5.2.1 “Otherness of the other”: seeing the other as human

The findings from this study offered a different way of viewing the radical concept of ‘otherness’, through seeing the other as ‘human’. To an extent, these findings coincide with Levinas’ understanding that otherness must be absolute: an absolute difference and infinitely unique (1979). In contrast, this study highlighted the notions of empathy, perspective-taking and common ground as a means of relating with the other versus suffering for the other; identifying, that while the other is different and to an extent unknowable (i.e. ‘the enemy’), they are also human and deserve the benefit of understanding. The following evaluates key research findings that relate to this concept and how participants transformed their perceptions and experience of the other group.

Participants abilities to form meaningful friendships with members of the other group corroborate with key examples in the literature that emphasise the courage, compassion and connection that is required to see and respect the world as others see it, while driving the importance of empathy in fuelling connection (Brown, 2006). Through the form of dialogue, empathy could be clearly communicated as participants demonstrated the importance of listening and understanding the subjective world of the other. Through acknowledging a mutual psychological pain and shared desire for peace, participants could be seen to share a “relational frame of reference” (Jordan, 1986: p.2; Rogers, 1975). Thus, the learning of empathy could be attributed as a means of facilitating the development of relationships with members of the other group.

Similarly, perspective-taking draws on the principles of empathy, as participants reported a strong desire to understand and consider the thoughts, feelings and intentions of the other (Hoever et al., 2012); irrespective of the differences in political narrative, participants' insistence to 'learn more' and be 'open-minded', demonstrated their capacity to hold the other in mind and thus recognise their perspective as their truth (Carkhuff, 1973; Rogers, 1957, 1975). In turn, participants' capacity to see differently influenced accounts of their lived experience, as they learned to see the other not only as more human, but more alike in thoughts, feelings and vulnerabilities. Relative to the extant literature, as participants experience a common sense of "vulnerability with each other it helps build trust", thus seeing participants learn to manage their relationships despite the contextual challenges of the prevailing conflict (LaBaron & Carstarphen, 1997: p.353).

Meanwhile, sharing common ground provided a crucial means through which participants could recognise their common affiliation with one another and overcome the conflict relationship. As expressed through their encounters during and following the seminar, participants' abilities to negotiate 'contracting views' demonstrated an underlying change that took place in their ways of thinking about one another. Hence, by promoting their common ground, participants unwittingly undermined the contradictory beliefs supporting the conviction of the other as 'enemy' and achieved mutual recognition and respect for the other as a human being, as evidenced by their lived accounts (Augsburger, 1992).

5.2.2 Behavioural Change

As explored through the extant literature, the concept of behavioural change is based on the principles of therapeutic (personality) change (Rogers, 1989). Explored in more detail below, are the ways in which the key aims of this thesis were met as a part of an integrative (mixed methods) approach; firstly, an evaluation of the statistical outcomes in relation to behavioural change and how this is understood in relation to core counselling principles of practice; and secondly, participants lived experience of change as a result of the COME seminar.

1. Have the COME seminars brought about Behavioural Change?

As the foundational objective of this study, the measure for behavioural change aimed to identify, statistically, whether participants experienced a change in their behaviour and perceptions of the other. Utilising the three standardised scales of measurement (Global empathy: Bachen et al., 2012; Openness to the other: Cosentino & Solano, 2014; Intergroup reconciliation: Noor et al., 2008), the aim was to explore statistically, any observed changes in behaviour over time (pre-to-post). The outcome from a paired samples T-test revealed that behaviour change was statistically non-significant.

Despite the lack of significance, changes that were observed in mean scores from pre-to-post measurement indicated a promising trend towards a change in a behaviour that could still be considered clinically important and warranted further consideration. As such, further analysis revealed some trends on between group factors. For example, significant interactions for global empathy on gender and cultural background (see: *chapter four*).

As an explorative approach, these results provide an opportunity to assess the robustness of standardised scales as well as the effects resulting in a small sample size. Coinciding with a reduced number of cases that could be matched from pre-to-post measure ($n=23$), the measurement limitations of each scale could be seen to contribute to the disappointing outcomes observed. Meanwhile, an a-priori power calculation conducted prior to the study commencing resulted in a minimum requirement of $n=27$, demonstrating that the matched number of cases may not be sufficient and would require a more optimum sample size (i.e. $n=35-50$) to reduce the possibility of a loss in statistical power. However, considering the population sizes for acquaintance seminars rarely exceed $n=50$, it would be advisable to consider alternative scale variables, or develop a new independent measure that can be standardised on a wider scale. Indeed, the purpose of utilising the three independent scales was an explorative method aimed at identifying a more appropriate and standardised means of measuring behavioural change in the context of cultural conflict, which to a degree was achieved.⁶

⁶ The researcher further acknowledges the methodological concerns resulting in the lack of strength in these findings (see: 5.4.1, *Methodological considerations and suggestions for future research*).

2. What aspect(s) of the COME seminar are helpful in fostering change?

Primarily through interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), the aim was to understand participants' experiences of the usefulness and meaningfulness of the seminars, and experiences of changes in their ideas, feelings or images in themselves and others (i.e. what changes occurred, if any, and why). Therefore, helping to inform a more detailed analysis of whether the seminars are in fact helping to change participants' perceptions of themselves in relation to the other.

As highlighted in chapter four (see: 4.2.3), the seminars were successful in facilitating a variety of process—namely, the motivation to learn, listen to and understand the other. Furthermore, the neutral context of the seminar based out of Cyprus alongside the diversity of group activities, encouraged participants to communicate in ways which otherwise they might not have encountered considering the minimal degree of contact in the context of their daily lives. The following summarises some of the key points regarding factors that were regarded as helpful and not helpful in fostering change and their relation to the extant literature.

Participants' accounts, both through the evaluation survey and follow-up interviews confirmed largely positive reviews of dialogue sessions. In the form of group-to-group, and one-to-one dialogue, participants reflected upon the ways in which they provided a unique and meaningful opportunity to express feelings and 'bond with the other'. This corroborates closely with therapeutic approaches, encouraging participants to identify and share feelings by engaging in free expression (Stone & Rutan, 2007; Rutan et al., 2014). Similarly, participants accounts demonstrated these sessions as empowering freedom of expression, providing catharsis, and encouraging greater sense of identification with the other (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Therefore, group interventions that facilitate these factors are understood as contributing positively to enduring behaviour change.

The variety of group exercises were also evaluated by participants as personally meaningful. For example, 'ice-breaker' activities, 'blindfolded experience' and 'in the others' shoes' encouraged participants to reflect on alternative perspectives and engaged

them in critical thinking regarding previously strong, held beliefs. Group therapeutic approaches that encourage participants to consider new ideas and engage in more helpful behaviours within the group are desirable factors for behavioural change (Molassiotis et al., 2002). Moreover, participants reflected on the ways in which both activities and organisation of the seminar facilitated a means of meeting the other in a unique way (beyond the context of conflict), allowing them to share experiences, connect, and begin considering new ways of thinking by hearing the other side. In effect, these relate closely to alternative group methods– while encouraging freedom of expression, also highlight the importance of examining beliefs and considering more positive ways of thinking of themselves in relation to the other (Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Arch & Craske, 2008). Effectively, group activities that participants recommended as most helpful and meaningful, were driven by dominant theoretical approaches to encouraging behaviour change in groups.

Notably, the issue of third party interference arose as a potential issue amongst Israeli participants. With references made to ‘Palestinian committee members’ or ‘facilitators’, participants remarked on the occasional interference of facilitators in the form of interjecting personal opinions, or favouring space to Palestinian participants during dialogue sessions. These concerns raise the need for third parties to establish a helping relationship between parties based on neutrality, sensitivity and creativity that would otherwise risk participants to feel marginalised, insecure or defensive (Fisher, 1983). Therefore, the need for facilitators to engage in ‘their role as impartial discussion leaders’ is an essential prerequisite for establishing trust between group members and allowing for “open and constructive problem-solving” (Fisher, 1983: p.303; Kelman, 2005; Halevy & Halali, 2015).

Moreover, while participants expressed their appreciation for the thoughtful execution and organisation of the seminar, several remarked on a sense that the programme was too ‘tight’ or overly packed with activities, ‘with not enough time’ in which to reflect in between. Meanwhile others expressed a desire for the programme to be longer, viewing the current 10-day length of the programme as too short for participants to be able to get to know each other before addressing topics of conflict. However, despite the mixed reviews, participants in general praised the programme of the study and the unique way it facilitated them to meet others and get to know them. Overall, this

highlights the important balance that is required between the interaction focus, tone and interventions to maximise on the success of the group process (Hill, 1982).

5.3 The Contributions of this Research

5.3.1 Possible Contributions to Counselling Psychology

The mixed methodological approach of this research has offered a rich and comprehensive insight into the nature of groups in conflict and the role of the group process in facilitating behavioural change.

While, statistical findings indicated at surface level, a non-significant change in participants' behaviour, participants reported lived experiences appear to have significant implications for understanding behavioural change that are relevant to counselling psychology theory and practice. What was achieved is a process through which individuals learned to value and understand the otherness inherent in the other, thereby seeing them not only as an enemy, but a human being. Moreover, the findings unearthed an unexpected outcome by which participants learned to genuinely care for and developed friendships with those from the other group in the limited time of the seminar. These findings are particularly relevant to counselling psychology theory, given the concept of therapeutic change. The process through which participants had undertaken during the seminar is reflective of the process of change that can be observed in clients within the traditional therapeutic setting. Secondly, the therapeutic implications of these findings highlight the application of the theoretical core conditions (i.e. empathy, understanding) and the ways these can be utilised and developed within the group process to promote behavioural change. Furthermore, the contribution of this research on counselling psychologists' capacity to work with difference and otherness is paramount, providing practitioners with the valuable insight, knowledge, and resources to work with diverse communities.

In the context of this research, appreciating 'otherness of the other', became the essential means of inspiring behavioural change in participants. Encompassing this are some of the key behavioural outcomes that are identified as necessary for improving the functionality of the group process and contributed to its success in the context of this

current study (e.g. Ron & Maoz, 2013; Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017; Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Gehlbach et al., 2015; Bilali et al., 2016; Pearson d'Estrée & Babbitt, 1998):

- i. Increased empathy and improvement in participants' perceptions of one another
- ii. Learning to take the perspective of the other and understand their world-view
- iii. Development of trust through self-disclosure (finding common ground)
- iv. Greater awareness of self and the other in the context of the conflict relationship

As identified in the literature (see: chapter two), the process of change aims to encourage development towards 'fully functioning' persons who, without feeling threatened can finally listen to themselves and to others without judgement, and with empathy and understanding (Rogers, 1961; 1975). Similarly, this process was demonstrated in participants' capacity to change following their experience in the seminar; developing from a state of rigidity and anxiety, participants could learn (through a balance of interpersonal and intergroup activity) to display confidence and trust in themselves and become more aware of the feelings and experience of others. Therefore, the means through which core counselling principles could be translated, utilised, and developed within the group process of cultural conflict, demonstrate the valuable and applicable use of counselling psychology theory and practice outside of the therapeutic context.

Meanwhile, the findings of this study provide a unique way forward for counselling psychology literature, illustrating the diverse use of theory not only within counselling practice but within the context of wider conflict management between and within groups. While the concept of group therapy is already widely established, the approach of conflict resolution therapy has currently limited and successful application with couples (Heitler, 2007). Therefore, there is a unique opportunity to expand the available information and knowledge on this area through the findings of this study, to support research initiatives and develop formalised training that are currently unavailable within therapeutic practice. In turn, this may likely help develop the niche for conflict

resolution therapy, widening its resources not only for couples, but for families, organisations and other minority groups.

Meanwhile, for counselling psychologists to consider, these findings demonstrate the importance of their ethical subjectivities and reflecting on the subtle practices that may be contributing to the legitimacy and recognition of difference and otherness in their clients (e.g. Moon, 2011). As a result, this can enable counselling psychologists to utilise knowledge for the benefit of diverse minority communities who are in need. Lastly, the ways in which this research has utilised multiple strands of knowledge from both cultural conflict and counselling psychology literature and practice (including both quantitative and qualitative methods), provides a unique opportunity to improve the application of programmes that could be made available not only to international communities, but local minority communities in the U.K that have experienced recent rises in inter-ethnic conflict. Therefore, the findings from this study have contributed uniquely to knowledge, by offering a unique perspective for understanding and addressing conflict in groups as a therapeutic problem.

5.3.2 Utility of Findings for Conflict Resolution Programmes

The further contributions of this thesis to knowledge highlight the contextual factors that are essential in successful conflict resolution programmes (i.e. based in a neutral setting), while identifying some of the challenges inherent to the success of such programmes, as identified through participants' experiences. The presence of specific group factors has been highlighted as contributing significantly to the success of conflict resolution programmes and improved behavioural outcomes in participants (e.g. Hill, 1982). However, while the presence of these factors is inherent to the successful outcomes of this thesis, previous findings have not investigated the contribution of counselling psychology to understanding the process of change and how this may effectively contribute to future of conflict resolution programmes both domestically and internationally.

Bridging the gap in knowledge between counselling psychology and conflict research, the findings from this thesis illustrate the means through which programmes may be applied domestically, enabling dialogue between diverse communities in society where this is currently lacking. As highlighted in the previous section, the lack of

resources and certified programmes for conflict resolution therapy highlights a pressing need to apply the conclusions made from this thesis to group interventions for cultural, religious or social conflict. The benefits inherent in this approach are both supported by previous research into effective intervention factors, and in the current example—providing insight into the contributions of counselling psychology practice to the understanding of therapeutic (behavioural) change in conflict groups.

Utility of findings for COME

To understand the relevance of these findings in relation to COME, we revisit the concept of behavioural change as this relates to Rogerian principles. The experience of change in self in relation to the other was derived from the interpretation of participants lived experiences of the COME seminars, and one which relates to our understanding of therapeutic personality change (Rogers & Dymond, 1954; Rogers, 1989). In relation to the extant literature, behavioural change is understood as both a surface and deeper level process leading to greater maturity and less internal conflict in self (Rogers, 1989).

The ways in which participants experiences of change relate to Roger's core conditions (1989) are the principals through which empathy, positive regard, and understanding the others' frame of reference were facilitated and communicated through the various forms of dialogue and group exercise. For example, one-to-one dialogue facilitated a unique opportunity to bring both sides in close psychological contact, encouraging individuals to listen to and understand the other's internal frame of reference. While this was experienced as an emotionally challenging process, participants expressed deeply meaningful changes in thoughts and feelings regarding the other, while also demonstrating profound changes in self that were expressed as both unexpected and overwhelming. Thus, providing a unique opportunity to engage in intimate forms of dialogue and activity, the COME seminar provided participants with the ideal conditions through which to communicate their feelings, listen to, and understand the other. Participants could then learn to feel and express the minimal degree of empathy and positive regard required to promote genuine behavioural change. As their accounts suggest, participants reported feeling more aware of their feelings and the feelings of others, thus showing a greater capacity to live in the present with greater confidence and trust (Rogers, 1961). As such, moving "from fixity to changingness" participants could be

more receptive to the other without feeling threatened, thus becoming more considerate of the other's experience in relation to their own (Rogers, 1961: p.131; 1957; 1959).

Meanwhile, unlike current examples in the literature, the benefit of applying a structured, non-political dialogue programme within a neutral context enabled both communities to be brought together who may otherwise have found it challenging, or would be restricted from gaining access to one another in the context of their everyday lives. This outcome for COME is a reassuring sign that the aims of their work are being met, and that continuing in their efforts to facilitate these humanising factors will continue to contribute to positive and enduring behaviour change in these groups. Meanwhile, these theoretical principles provide COME with an opportunity to expand on their knowledge and awareness to develop the programme in ways that maximise group effectiveness. Therefore, the example made by the COME seminars may have further implications:

Firstly, by informing means of best practice, the programme benefits from learning how to gain the most from group participation through more varied and creative dialogue and activity, and perhaps a longer programme that allows participants greater space to break down barriers and reflect on their own personal process.

Secondly, it expands on the breadth of knowledge needed to work within minority groups, especially for group facilitators and/or practitioners who either lack experience working with minority cultures or for COME, to provide development and awareness training for group facilitators regarding the importance of third party interference. In doing so, COME helps to promote the importance of culturally responsive and sensitive practice in negotiating aspects of difference amongst groups in conflict, thus helping to establish and maintain a helping relationship between group members that is based on neutrality, fairness, creativity and sensitivity (Fisher, 1983). The need for group facilitators to be not only well informed, but critically self-reflective is essential, as the current research has demonstrated the potential implications of third party interference on group effectiveness. Lastly, this thesis demonstrates diverse use of theoretical principles not only within the therapeutic setting, but within the context of wider conflict management—demonstrating that conflict in racial, ethnic and minority groups is a therapeutic problem.

The following section provides methodological considerations and suggestions for future research regarding conflict resolution programmes.

5.4 Critical Evaluation of the Research

5.4.1 Methodological considerations and suggestions for future research

Mixed Methods: A Model of Integration

In conducting a mixed methods research project, I provided justification for my epistemological stance, seeking to take advantage of the pragmatic benefits in bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative paradigms through the integrative approach of critical-realism (see: *chapter three*). In doing so, I have been reminded of the challenges that may be faced with such an approach – are mixed methods altogether helpful or beneficial?

The challenges I have encountered with the mixed methods approach are the manipulation or reduction of data, otherwise known as the demands of combining two types of data into a PsychD doctoral thesis. Demanding often a great deal of time and resource management, I encountered the challenges of compiling and analysing large sets of data over the period of one year and a half. This is perhaps one of the most unresolved challenges of mixed methods research and one which requires handling with great care to make these research studies effective and efficient. Utilising academic resources and the support of COME representatives allowed for this process to be handled with patience and care as I worked with the data remotely. Nevertheless, I found that using an integrative theoretical approach to the research (underpinned by a critical-realist epistemology), led to the most insightful findings and emergent themes that would otherwise have not come to light if I had taken a single method approach to this thesis (Creswell, 2009). The complimentary relationship between both sets of data allowed for one (statistical findings) to clarify, direct and inform the other (insight into lived experience), thereby triangulating the data for greater validation of the phenomenon in question (i.e. behavioural change).

Meanwhile, the ‘double hermeneutics’ of IPA infers that results rely on the researchers “experientially-informed” interpretation of the participants mean-making, thereby resulting in one reading of several that may be possible (Smith et al., 2009: p.35-36). However, by following the appropriate steps of analysis throughout, an attempt to

minimise researcher subjectivity was monitored by a process of reflexivity (see: below). A part of this acknowledges the inevitably joint endeavour of both participant and researcher to obtain a faithful account of the participant's lived experience of the seminar; which without the phenomena in question would leave little to interpret, while the hermeneutic account ensures that the phenomena may be seen at all (Smith et al., 2009; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014).

Overall, it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to enhancing awareness of diverse minority groups in society and the benefit of applying conflict intervention methods to the therapeutic group process. Furthermore, the application of these findings for academic counselling psychology may be beneficial, as this study has provided awareness of issues that are relevant to relational theory and practice.

The Importance and Effect of Sample Size

Meanwhile, the generalisability of this research could be limited for its minimal sample size. As a possible contributing factor to the loss of statistical power in the initial findings, it raises two concerns for future research: firstly, a small sample size increases the probability that any significance found may be the result of a false positive, thus increasing the likelihood of type one errors; and secondly, that small samples increase the likelihood of missing important behavioural differences.

In hindsight, I would suggest that for the quantitative component, a larger sample size could ensure a more confident and statistically stronger outcome than originally found in this sample population, thus increasing the likelihood that a statistically significant finding is reflecting a true effect. However, while this is desirable for quantitative purposes alone, these findings were essentially an explorative and informative tool for the more in-depth qualitative study; its purpose of exploring the lived experience of seminar participants, led to enriched understanding of the factors that were helpful and non-helpful in fostering the behavioural changes— of which a statistical trend was identified in the first part of this study.

Similarly, the choice of adopting IPA as the qualitative method of study may also entail the question of appropriate sample size. However, due to the interpretative and phenomenological nature of the method, sample size is dependent on the degree of commitment that is given to analysis and reporting, the richness of available data and the

organisational resources afforded by the research (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, the primary concern of IPA is being “capable of capturing the quality of participants’ experience”, and given the complexity of the phenomena in question, this study has benefited largely from a concentrated focus on four participants lived experience of the seminar seen through the context of their everyday lives (Willig, 2007: p.217 cited in, Shinebourne, 2011).

5.4.2 Review of researcher’s reflexivity

Throughout this research, I valued the reflexive process which enabled me to uncover my assumptions and the personal influences that contributed to this choice of study (Ortlipp, 2008). Regular research supervision and the use of my own reflective diary were essential tools for expanding my awareness and uncovering some of the prior assumptions I held regarding the work. Therefore, by monitoring my own thoughts and feelings, I could maintain openness, sensitivity and curiosity to the developing work.

This process highlights the importance of the researcher’s responsibility to honour the phenomena which they study, irrespective of the chosen method. As such, I considered the reflexive process an enabling tool, allowing me to be sensitive and responsive to participants lived experiences without the risk of my own assumptions and experiences interfering with the process.

Meanwhile, the epistemological (critical-realist) positioning of this research shed important light on a complex, intractable conflict, bringing to the fore multiple valid constructions of reality as experienced through participant accounts. As well as this, critical-realism acknowledges the influence of the researcher’s own reality-constructions on the phenomena they study, which in accordance with continued reflexivity, enhanced my awareness of, and affiliation with the participants, particularly during the interview process (Bhaskar, 1989; Archer et al., 1998).

While conducting the interviews, I became very aware of my own reality-constructions, and how upon encountering the lived experience of the other I could step outside of that frame and experience the world through a different set of lenses. What impacted me the most was the personal account of an Israeli participant I had interviewed. Hearing the desire of the Israeli group to be present and “very ready to talk”, spoke of their desire to listen to and understand the pain of the Palestinians. I found this

to be most striking where juxtaposed with “the reality we don’t feel safe”, the Palestinians evoked a sense of fear, anger and resistance that felt overwhelming for this participant to sit with in the initial stages. The sense of a barrier that felt difficult to relinquish felt both frustrating and deeply impacting for this participant—and which evoked in me a sombre and sobering feeling about the reality of the conflict. The difference in narrative between the macro (political) and micro (societal) level felt deeply telling of the struggle for these participants to establish co-existence. As a result, I experienced a profound change in feeling; reflecting a similar process to that of the seminar participants, I felt susceptible to a new experience, but now in the position to enhance my awareness of the other and to appreciate reality as they saw it.

Conscious of change, I sought to bracket-off my own assumptions, and with increased curiosity, I found these assumptions transforming through the experienced eyes of the other. Gaining this renewed insight enabled me to produce a faithful reading as a unique understanding that is relevant not only to my personal and professional development, but to counselling psychology and the importance of culturally responsive and sensitive practice. Equally, my developing identity as a Middle-eastern counselling psychologist enhanced my motivation to understand how both Israelis and Palestinians experienced their interpersonal struggle and their collective desire to heal the wounds and co-exist in peace. This process has been vital for my own professional development, encouraging me in my own practice to be critical of the subtle assumptions we all as counsellors inevitably bring to our work and the responsibility we carry to give recognition and legitimacy to the hetero-normative versions of social, cultural and emotional life that our clients bring with them (Moon, 2011).

5.5 Conclusion

This research has successfully addressed its aims, contributing new insights into participants experiences of an acquaintance (reconciliation) seminar, and how this may inform improved ways of working therapeutically with conflict in the context of groups. The use of mixed methods provided a multiple lens through which to explore the aims of the COME seminar and fulfil the objectives of this research that otherwise would not have been achieved by a qualitative or quantitative approach alone. Providing in-depth analysis into the lived experience of the seminar and the impact of change, the qualitative study enhanced and enriched the initial quantitative findings that were inconclusive, thus triangulating the findings and producing a coherent narrative. Furthermore, the findings corroborate with the existing literature on the effectiveness of group process and the means through which Rogerian principles of therapeutic personality change could be applied to understanding the development of empathy, perspective-taking and common ground– thus inspiring participants to give the other ‘a more human face’.

Meanwhile, the in-depth findings of this thesis can contribute significantly to helping COME build on the success of their programme, supporting them to find creative ways to enhance participation and inspire behavioural change. Nonetheless, contextual challenges that participants faced highlight the realities of working with conflict, while providing a unique opportunity for non-profit organisations around the world and locally to revise the ways they look at reconciliation that begins at the micro level, up. Furthermore, the statistically non-significant outcomes of this study should not be slighted because, at the experiential level, participants’ accounts of their experience painted a very different picture of what is occurring at the micro level of society. The relevant states and their opposing institutions express very different national and political interests that appear to misrepresent the needs and views of its people at the micro level of society. Therefore, these findings provide a valuable and unique opportunity to work therapeutically with groups, thereby giving recognition and legitimacy to the on-going struggle of minority groups in conflict.

Nevertheless, what summarises the findings of this thesis is a transformation in the notion of ‘otherness’. The becoming of the other as not only a human being, but as a

friend is an outcome that neither the researcher nor the participants anticipated. This transformative process is summarised by one of the most impacting quotes of the study:

“First [changes] in my thoughts and feelings, like the things I thought that were really clear to me before, changed. (...) I was surprised that it affected me that much”.

This, juxtaposed by the layers of complexity in the reality which they live, participants continue to negotiate new found friendship and the desire for resolution—all which reveal the intractable nature of cultural conflict; but the opportunity and hope that rises from friendship and love across conflict lines, only emphasises the difference in narrative between the micro and macro level of society. The changes we have observed through the COME seminars, promoted by a humanising group process, have demonstrated the kind of change we hope to see endure at the societal level, by effectively ‘changing a culture from within’. When taken from this perspective, it is possible to see that if we learn from the outcomes of this research, organisations may be encouraged to build on a mutual understanding of the helpful factors that emphasise behavioural change in such groups, and could be taken to an institutional level in which all members in society may work to develop a common goal for peaceful co-existence—an outcome that is desired by all.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference PSYC 15/183 in the Department of Psychology and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 8th August 2015.

Dear Noora,

Ethics Application

Applicant: Noora Hussain
Title: Giving the other a human face: A counselling psychology perspective on the potential benefit of an intergroup encounter intervention between Israelis and Palestinians in Cyprus
Reference: PSYC 15/ 183
Department: Psychology

Many thanks for your response and the amended documents. Under the procedures agreed by the University Ethics Committee I am pleased to advise you that your Department has confirmed that all conditions for approval of this project have now been met. We do not require anything further in relation to this application.

Please note that on a standalone page or appendix the following phrase should be included in your thesis:

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference PSYC 15/ 183 in the Department of Psychology and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 06.08.15, final confirmation 08.09.15.

Please advise us if there are any changes to the research during the life of the project. Minor changes can be advised using the Minor Amendments Form on the Ethics Website, but substantial changes may require a new application to be submitted.

Many thanks,

Jan

Jan Harrison

Ethics Officer

Research Office

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Appendix 2



COME Foundation - **CO**munication **M**iddle **E**ast - Stichting **COME**
seminars - meetings - communication - dialogue

Dear participant of the COME seminar,

We are happy to welcome you as participant in the COME acquaintance seminar. We would like to ask you to fill out this first questionnaire before the seminar. There will also be one more evaluation questionnaire to complete at the end of the seminar. The aim of these questionnaires is to develop an understanding of whether acquaintance seminars like this one developed by COME for the Middle East are useful, and whether the experience is helpful for participants in their ideas and feelings about the other group. If they are, what can this tell us about developing further meetings for other conflict groups? If not, what can be done to improve these seminars and experience for participants in the future?

In order to help us answer these questions, we would be grateful if you could fill in the attached questionnaire. It can be completed online through the link provided or on paper. First, you will complete some short demographics questions then you will fill out the main questionnaire, which asks about your reasons for attending the seminar, your motivations and then additional questions regarding your thoughts and feelings about the experience and what it means for you.

No one other than the researcher will see your individual responses, and they will be treated safely and confidentially. However, by agreeing to participate, you understand that there may be some instances in which the investigator may be required to break confidentiality, such as if there are concerns about a serious harm to yourself or others.

Your cooperation will help contribute to improving participants' future experience and possibly the work around acquaintance seminars in the Middle East and internationally.

There may be a small likelihood that thinking about your past experiences may cause some distressing feelings. If this occurs, you can contact Maaïke at maaikehh@gmail.com, or you may find it useful to contact your former committee member representative. However, if you would like to speak with the research supervisor of this study you may contact Dr Joel Vos, Joel.Vos@roehampton.ac.uk.

Data from this study will be stored in anonymised format indefinitely. It will be used for one or more journal articles in regards to the effectiveness of acquaintance seminars in the Middle East, and may also be used for other educational or teaching purposes. In any publications, your details will not be identifiable in any way, therefore you do not need to

provide your name. You also have the right to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, and this will not influence your participation in the seminar; although if you do so, you understand that any data you provide might still be used in a collated form.

If you are happy to continue, please follow the link to the questionnaire where you will be guided to the consent page in order to complete the questionnaire, or complete below.

Thank you!

Noora, Maaïke and The COME committee members
Stitching COME 2015

Noora (principle researcher)
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If you would like to contact an independent party, you can contact:

Head of Department:
Diane Bray
Holybourne Avenue
Department of Psychology
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London SW15 4JD
d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
0208 392 3741

Consent

I have read this form and the purpose of the study has been explained. I understand that I have the opportunity to ask questions and any questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above:

ACCEPT ☐

DECLINE ☐

Appendix 3



COME Foundation - **CO**munication **M**iddle **E**ast - Stichting **COME** -
Seminars - meetings - communication - dialogue

‘Your experience now’ Moving on from the COME Seminar

Dear former participant of the COME seminar,

We kindly request your further consent for participation in a Skype (audio) telephone interview. The questions asked will give us more information on your opinions of the usefulness of COME seminars, and to give future participants in the same position as yourself information to understand the seminars and their vital work. There are no right or wrong answers – we are keen to gain a wide variety of opinions that will be of great value for the future.

This consent form asks you to allow us to record the interview and to use your comments to improve understanding of the topic. Data from the recordings will be stored in anonymous format indefinitely, with names changed to pseudonyms in writing of results. No one other than the researcher will see your individual responses, and they will be treated safely and confidentially, except if there are concerns about a serious harm to yourself or others.

Participation in an interview is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you agree to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question during the interview. The interview will take no more than 60 minutes.

By consenting you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, and that you agree to the terms as described. If you have any questions, please contact Maaïke Hoffer (maaikehh@gmail.com) or myself (details below), who will contact you shortly to arrange the telephone conversation.

We understand that it may have been a while since you participated, but we would be very grateful for your response. Thank you in advance for your further participation!

Noora, Maaïke and COME committee members
COME 2017

Noora Hussain (principle researcher)
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if you would like to contact an independent party, you can contact:

Head of Department and Director of Studies Contact Details:
Diane Bray
Holybourne Avenue
Department of Psychology
University of Roehampton
London SW15 4JD
d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
0208 392 3741

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research in which I will be asked questions about the usefulness of the COME seminar. I am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Agree ☐

Decline ☐

Appendix 4

Dear COME participant,

Thank you for showing recent interest in the follow-up study. If you are available soon, we would kindly request your consent to participate in a Skype (audio) telephone interview. The questions asked will give us more information on your opinions of the usefulness of COME seminars, and give future participants in the same position as you, more information to understand the seminars and their vital work. There are no right or wrong answers – we would like to get a variety of opinions that will be of great value for the future.

The consent form you will find in the attachment asks you to allow us to record the interview and to use your comments to improve understanding of the topic. Data from the recordings will be stored anonymously, with names changed when writing up. No one other than the researcher will see your individual responses, and they will be treated safely and confidentially, except if there are concerns about a serious harm to yourself or others.

Participation in an interview is voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you agree to participate, you may still stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question during the interview. The interview will take no more than 60 minutes.

By consenting you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, and that you agree to the terms as described. If you have any questions, please contact Maaïke Hoffer (maaikehh@gmail.com) or myself, who will contact you shortly to arrange a suitable time for the telephone conversation via Skype.

Please reply to this e-mail with a response to the information and consent form attached, showing that you 'agree' or 'decline'.

We understand that it may have been a while since you participated, but we would be very grateful for your response. Thank you in advance for your further participation!

Noora, Maaïke and COME committee members
COME 2017

Appendix 5



Stichting **COME** Foundation - **CO**mmunication **M**iddle **E**ast
Stichting **COME** Seminars - Meetings - Communication - Dialogue

Please create your 6-digit participant ID code so that we may identify your responses. This can be a combination of any 6 different numbers that are easy for you to remember. Please keep this number safe, as you will need it later in the seminar, while filling out the evaluation questionnaire. Please **DO NOT** use a popular code like 123456 or 000000. See below for an example:

i.e. Your date of birth or that of someone you know very well (ddmmyy/180886)

.....

Questions

How old are you?

What is your gender?

Male / Female / Other:

What is your level of education?

None / Primary school / Secondary school / Post-secondary school / University / Other:

.....

What is your religious background?

None / Muslim / Jewish / Christian / other:

Do you currently have a job?

Yes / No / No, I'm a Student / No, (please state other reason):

.....

To which circumstantial group do you feel that you belong?

'48 Palestinian / '67 Palestinian / Jewish Israeli / Born-Israeli / Migrant-Israeli / other:

.....

1. How did you hear about the COME seminar?

.....

.....

.....

2. What is your main reason to participate? Choose one of the following options:

- ☐ To meet people
 - ☐ To make friends
 - ☐ To tell my story
 - ☐ To learn new information/facts
 - ☐ To change the opinions of the other side
 - ☐ To say what I think is important
 - ☐ Other:

4. What do you expect from the seminar? Choose one or more of the following options:

- ☐ To learn the opinion of the other side
- ☐ To make friends
- ☐ To change opinions of the others
- ☐ A real dialogue
- ☐ To find solutions
- ☐ Nothing
- ☐ A lot of fun
- ☐ Active participants
- ☐ Other:

5. How would the seminar be successful for you, in your opinion? Choose the most important one of the following options:

- ☐ If I have hope at the end of the seminar
- ☐ If I have become friends with others in the other group
- ☐ If I was able to say what is important for me
- ☐ If I have heard the opinions of everyone
- ☐ If the committee was supportive
- ☐ If I feel I have participated in an active way
- ☐ If opinions of the other sides changed
- ☐ If I have become friends with others in my own group
- ☐ If it helps us to find a solution for the problems in the Middle East Conflict
- ☐ Other:

We will use this questionnaire to improve the seminars and understand your thoughts and opinions on your experiences. So, we would like to ask you some more questions. Please rate your opinion on each question from 1-6:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree that it describes me	Disagree that it describes me	Only slightly disagree that it describes	Only slightly agree that it describes me	Agree that it describes me	Strongly agree that it describes me
	Statement			How much do you agree?	
1	I am aware of how the political and social rights (e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) of people in other countries can be quite different from my own.				
2	I am aware that people in other countries can have their freedoms or rights taken away.				
3	I am aware of political, social, and economic barriers that lead to discrimination of people in other countries.				

4	It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person living in a different country than my own.	
5	I can relate to the frustration that some people of different countries feel about having fewer opportunities due to the economic, political, or social circumstances of their countries.	
6	I feel motivated to help promote changes that improve people's living conditions in different parts of the world.	
7	I am likely to participate in events that promote equal rights for people in other countries.	
8	I feel supportive of those in other countries who may experience injustice because of their political or social (e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) background.	
9	I can see myself taking action (e.g., signing a petition or sending money) to help those in another country who are experiencing discrimination because of their political or social background.	
10	I share the anger of those in other countries who face injustice because of their political or social (e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) background.	
11	I feel that being actively involved in global or international issues is my responsibility.	
12	I feel pleasure and fascination when learning the customs of other cultures.	
13	I think it's important to travel to other countries to interact with people from cultures that are different from mine.	
14	I love being with people who come from another culture and have beliefs that are different from mine.	
15	I believe that the beliefs of cultures different from mine	

	are false and inaccurate.	
16	I do not like interacting with people who have values different from those of my culture.	
17	I distrust people who come from a culture different from mine.	
18	My community and the other community need to change our relationship with each other.	
19	Reconciliation requires that my community interacts respectfully with the other community.	
20	My community needs to talk with the other community about issues that divide us.	
21	Reconciliation between the two communities is not needed.	

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Noora & the committee members

2016



Appendix 6

(Consent and full information sheet not required here as participants have been provided this within initial information sheet and consent agreement (appendix 2))



Stichting **COME** Foundation - **CO**munication **M**iddle **E**ast
COME **S**eminars - Meetings - Communication – Dialogue

Evaluation of the seminar August 29 – September 8, 2016

Dear participant of the COME seminar,

Please, fill in the following questions. This will help you to evaluate the seminar. The questionnaire will take approximately one hour to complete. No one other than the researcher will see your individual responses; therefore, they will be treated safely and confidentially.

Feel free to give any comments and suggestions. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact Maaïke (maaikehh@gmail.com) or one of your committee members.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation by filling in this evaluation form. We will learn a lot from it!

Part I. Evaluation of the seminar in numbers

You do not have to write down your name; this questionnaire is anonymous, however we would like you to fill in the unique 6-digit ID code that we asked you to create and save in the questionnaire you filled in during preparation. Example: Your date of birth or that of someone you know very well (ddmmyy/180886)

.....

How old are you?

What is your gender?

Male / Female / Other:

What is your religious background?

None / Muslim / Jewish / Christian / other:

To which circumstantial group do you feel that you belong?

'48 Palestinian / '67 Palestinian / Jewish Israeli / Born-Israeli / Migrant-Israeli / other:

.....

This part consists of general issues and the activities of the seminar. Please, give a number to each of the following issues/activities.

Evaluation of different activities

1 Absolutely meaningful	2 Meaningful	3 Neutral	4 Not meaningful	5 Absolutely not meaningful
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Date	Activity	How meaningful was this to you?
Monday 29/08	Ice breaking games	
	Acquaintance	
Tuesday 30/08	Hike	
	Personal appointments during the hike	
	Personal expectations	

	Group expectations	
	Committee expectations	
	Letter to yourself	
	Listening activity	
	Circumstantial group meeting	
Wednesday 31/08	Fears and Trust: exercises	
	Fears and Trust: discussion	
	History Timeline and discussion	
	Map activity	
	Personal appointments	
	Fixed mixed group reflection	
Thursday 01/09	Film 1	
	Discussion about the film	
	Free time in Pafos	
Friday 02/09	Preparation group-to-group	
	Group to group meeting ('67 Pal – Jew. Isr)	
	Group to group meeting (Jew. Isr – '48 Pal)	
	Group to group meeting ('67 Pal – '48 Pal)	
Saturday 03/09	Hot Topic	
	Personal appointments	

	Where are we?	
	Palestinian cultural night	
Sunday 04/09	Film 2	
	Discussion about film	
	Meeting in Nicosia about the conflict in Cyprus	
Monday 05/09	Walk along the Green Line	
	Introduction to conflict Cyprus	
	Activity: In the other shoes	
	Activity: Hot topic	
	Stay and dinner in Centrum Hotel Nicosia	
Tuesday 06/09	Film 3	
	Discussion about the film	
	Yes/No exercise	
	Hot topic	
	Israeli cultural night	
Wednesday 07/09	Play / Creative activity	

Your experience during the seminar.

Fill in for each following statement: on the scale of 1 to 5, how much do you agree with this statement?

1 Completely agree	2 Agree	3 Neutral	4 Disagree	5 Completely disagree
	Statement			How much do you agree?

1	I had the opportunity to openly express ideas and feelings that are important to me	
2	I have seen and/or heard the ideas, motivations and feelings of people from the other side of the conflict, that I would/could never see/hear at home	
3	I am thinking more about my relationships with people from other groups	
4	I have learnt how to speak with people that I usually do not speak with at home	
5	I have dealt with a lot of emotions	
6	I was motivated during activities	
7	I felt part of the whole group (Israelis and Palestinians)	
8	I felt part of my own ethnic/cultural group	
9	I felt relaxed	
10	I learned to listen to other people	
11	I learned new facts about the conflicts between groups in the Middle East	
12	I have changed how I think/feel about my own group	
13	I have changed how I think/feel about the other group	
14	I want to change how I live together with other people from other national groups, when I return home	
15	This seminar was a useful experience for me and I am glad I attended	
16	The organization should continue organizing this seminar in the future	
17	I would like to be involved in the organization of future seminars	
18	I would like to stay in contact with the people that I met here.	
19	I would not delete this questions	
20	There was safety and trust between people	
21	There was respect and acceptance between people	

22	I felt there was equality between people	
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We will use this questionnaire to improve the seminars and understand your thoughts and opinions on your experiences. So we would like to ask you some more questions.

Please rate your opinion on each question from 1-6:

1 Strongly disagree that it describes me	2 Disagree that it describes me	3 Only slightly disagree that it describes	4 Only slightly agree that it describes me	5 Agree that it describes me	6 Strongly agree that it describes me
Statement				How much do you agree?	
1	I am aware of how the political and social rights (e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) of people in other countries can be quite different from my own.				
2	I am aware that people in other countries can have their freedoms or rights taken away.				
3	I am aware of political, social, and economic barriers that lead to discrimination of people in other countries.				
4	It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person living in a different country than my own.				
5	I can relate to the frustration that some people of different countries feel about having fewer opportunities due to the economic, political, or social circumstances of their countries.				
6	I feel motivated to help promote changes that improve people's living conditions in different parts of the world.				
7	I am likely to participate in events that promote equal rights for people in other countries.				
8	I feel supportive of those in other countries who may experience injustice because of their political or social				

	(e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) background.	
9	I can see myself taking action (e.g., signing a petition or sending money) to help those in another country who are experiencing discrimination because of their political or social background.	
10	I share the anger of those in other countries who face injustice because of their political or social (e.g., ethnic, racial, or gender) background.	
11	I feel that being actively involved in global or international issues is my responsibility.	
12	I feel pleasure and fascination when learning the customs of other cultures.	
13	I think it's important to travel to other countries to interact with people from cultures that are different from mine.	
14	I love being with people who come from another culture and have beliefs that are different from mine.	
15	I believe that the beliefs of cultures different from mine are false and inaccurate.	
16	I do not like interacting with people who have values different from those of my culture.	
17	I distrust people who come from a culture different from mine.	
18	My community and the other community need to change our relationship with each other.	
19	Reconciliation requires that my community interacts respectfully with the other community.	
20	My community needs to talk with the other community about issues that divide us.	
21	Reconciliation between the two communities is not	

	needed.	
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Part II. Evaluation of the seminar in words

What are the three key experiences, lessons or messages that you will take home from the seminar? Please try to describe them as clear as possible.

1
2
3

Did your ideas, feelings or images about other people change as a result of this experience? If yes, describe how they have changed.

--

How would you like to apply your experiences from this seminar at home?

--

In your opinion, what was the **best** part of the seminar?

--

--

Similarly, what was the **worst** part of the seminar?

--

Will you advise your friends and/or relatives to participate in this seminar? Why yes or why not?

--

What is your personal opinion about this kind of seminar, do you believe it is useful?

--

Do you have further remarks, comments, criticisms and/or positive or negative additions to your opinions?

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Thank you very much!

Noora & the committee members 2016

stichting
C.O.M.E.

Appendix 7

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview, just to start I will give another short introduction about the follow-up and confirm you are happy to continue.

The questions I will ask you today will give us more information on your opinions of the usefulness of COME seminars, and to give future participants in the same position as yourself information to understand the seminars and their important work.

Again, there are no right or wrong answers – we are very interested to hear your opinions, which will be of great value for future work and hopefully for you to think again about what the experience meant for you.

By consenting you are agreeing that you have read the description of the study, and agree to the terms described in the consent form sent to you before the interview.

Can you confirm that you have read the information and consent to continue?

(If yes, continue; if no, read out and explain information and consent before continuing)

Just to let you know, I won't be interrupting a lot, so don't worry if you hear some silence, as I'd like to listen carefully to your experiences while you talk. Take your time with thinking about what the questions mean for you.

1. Following the seminar, have you experienced any changes in your ideas, feelings or images about yourself?
[Follow up question] What changes did you experience?
[Follow up question] What caused these changes, in your experience?
2. Following the seminar, have you experienced any changes in your ideas, feelings or images about others?
[Follow up question] What changes did you experience?
[Follow up question] What caused these changes, in your experience?
3. In your experience, WHAT was helpful about the seminar?

[Follow-up question] WHY was helpful?

4. In your experience, WHAT was unhelpful about the seminar?

[Follow-up question] WHY was this unhelpful?

General prompts (follow up):

- Could you tell more about that?
- How did that make you feel?
- Could you give some examples?
- Could you be more specific?
- Do you want to say something else about this question?

Appendix 8

Detailed programme of events for COME seminar August 29th-September 8th 2016

Date	Activity
Monday 29/08	Ice breaking games Acquaintance
Tuesday 30/08	Hike Personal appointments during the hike Personal expectations Group expectations Committee expectations Letter to yourself Listening activity Circumstantial group meeting
Wednesday 31/08	Fears and Trust: exercises Fears and Trust: discussion History Timeline and discussion Map activity Personal appointments Mixed group reflection
Thursday 01/09	Cultural film 1 Discussion about the film Free time in Pafos, Cyprus
Friday 02/09	Preparation group-to-group Group to group meeting ('67 Pal – Jew. Isr) Group to group meeting (Jew. Isr – '48 Pal) Group to group meeting ('67 Pal – '48 Pal)
Saturday 03/09	Activity: Hot Topic Personal appointments Discussion: where are we? Palestinian cultural night
Sunday 04/09	Cultural film 2

	<p>Discussion about film</p> <p>Meeting in Nicosia about the conflict in Cyprus</p>
Monday 05/09	<p>Walk along the Green Line</p> <p>Introduction to conflict Cyprus</p> <p>Activity: In the others' shoes</p> <p>Activity: Hot topic</p> <p>Stay and dinner in Centrum Hotel Nicosia</p>
Tuesday 06/09	<p>Cultural film 3</p> <p>Discussion about the film</p> <p>Yes/No exercise</p> <p>Activity: Hot topic</p> <p>Israeli cultural night</p>
Wednesday 07/09	<p>Play / Creative activity</p>

Appendix 9

Emergent themes	Line number	Original transcript	Descriptive comments
Multiple/major changes	82	Researcher: [00:02:40] So I'll	In many ways, she has experienced changes - in what ways?
	83	start with the first question.	
	84	Following the seminar of what	
	85	you remember. Have you	
	86	experienced any changes in your	
	87	ideas your feelings or images	
	88	about yourself?	
	89		
	90	Rachel: [00:03:12] In myself...	
	91	[Researcher: Yeah] Yes. In many	
Changes in thoughts, opinions, feelings, behaviour and language	92	ways, yeah.	Changes in thoughts and feelings
	93		
	94	Researcher: [00:03:16] OK,	
	95	[Rachel: should I explain...] so	
	96	what changes did you experience?	
	97		
	98	Rachel: [00:03:16] First in my	
	99	thoughts and feelings like things I	
	100	thought that were really clear to	
	101	me before, changed. I had very	
Ideas about the conflict	102	strong opinion about the conflict	Thoughts/opinions that seemed clear and strong before, have changed?
	103	about our life here. I had like a	
	104	way of thinking of this whole	
	105	situation and it changed a lot.	
	106		
	107	Rachel: [00:03:39] And the fact	
	108	that it could change was very, it	
	109	was really amazing just the fact	
	110	that it could change and it	
	111	changed a lot that I had like some	
Unexpected feelings	112	something about it was very I	A major change; The fact it could change this much: sense of surprise, amazement, a positive feeling?
	113	don't know like mouldable, can	
	114	you say that, like it was very easy	
	115	to do, what the second I met	
	116	people I started talking about it	
	117	in a different way so it really it	
	118	was easy for it to change and it	
	119	changed the way of the way I was	
	120	thinking about it and that was	
	121	very interesting for me. Not about	
Multiple/major changes	122	the conflict about myself that I	Talking differently, changing language?
	123	could have that big change in	
	124	thoughts and feelings.	
	125		
	126	Researcher: [00:04:17] Yeah, and	
	127	you were very, it seems you were	
	128	very surprised about those	
	129	changes that you had in yourself.	
Openness to change			Fascinated by the change in self more than ideas around conflict, curiosity
Changes in thoughts, opinions, feelings, behaviour and language			Big change:
Unexpected feelings			

Unexpected feelings	130	Rachel: [00:04:24] I wasn't like crazy surprised but I was surprised that it that it affected me that much [researcher: yeah, OK]. Like the surprising part about it was like the amount of like how much affected me. Yeah [researcher, mmm OK] that it did affect was interesting. The amount of like how much [researcher: how much it did] that was that and also like I felt like I have a lot of space like the seminar gave me a lot of like a lot of space to talk and like [researcher: oh, good] and say my feelings and I felt very comfortable [Researcher: that's good]. That was also very interesting for me.	thoughts/feelings
	131		
	132		
	133		
	134		<i>Picking up on sense of surprise/amazement in participant's experience</i>
	135		
	136		
	137		
	138		
	139		Of being affected, emotionally? Of a change/shift within oneself?
Degree of change	140	[researcher: how much it did] that was that and also like I felt like I have a lot of space like the seminar gave me a lot of like a lot of space to talk and like [researcher: oh, good] and say my feelings and I felt very comfortable [Researcher: that's good]. That was also very interesting for me.	
	141		
	142		
	143		
	144		Sense of feeling affected is strong.
	145		Why is this feeling so significant? Because opinions were so strong before? So assured, now the picture seems different
	146		
	147		
	148		
	149		
Freedom of expression	150	Researcher: [00:05:02] I guess that brings in the second question in that is what, what for you caused those changes in your experience so what exactly about the seminar about the experience caused that change for you in yourself [Rachel: ermm]. In particular, any examples if you can give them.	Space to talk, express feelings in seminar feeling important
	151		
	152		
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	159		
Openness to the other	160	Rachel: [00:05:22] It's hard for me to say like what were the specific programs that we did.	Experience of finding it hard to articulate/reflect on specific aspects of the experience
	161		
	162		
	163		
	164		
	165		
	166		
	167		
	168		
	169		
Freedom of expression	170	[00:05:29] So like the people, the people, the people and the fact that everyone was, were like the people were there. It felt like everyone is very like in the room. Everyone was very into learning and listening...Yeah I felt like the people in the Israeli group were very...I could relate to them really easily. And I was I could like I felt like I could talk to them and feel very comfortable and to express my feeling. And I didn't feel any judgment not just the	People: presence of others, being together, present, an importance of togetherness?
	171		
	172		
	173		
	174		
	175		
	176		Learning and listening
	177		
	178		Relating to one's group, openness to talk and express feelings
	179		
Freedom of expression	180		
	181		
	182		Lack of judgement; Feeling open to
	183		

Openness to change	184 185 186	Israeli group or not, in general. And that I could actually like be very open with my feelings.	express feelings, importance of safety and comfort to facilitate openness to others?
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Appendix 10

Emerging themes	Key words/Phrase
Multiple/major changes	the fact that it could change and it changed a lot
Changes in thoughts, opinions, feelings, behaviour and language	In my thoughts and feelings...things I thought that were really clear to me before, changed
Ideas about the conflict	I had very strong opinion about the conflict, about our life here
Unexpected feelings	I was surprised that it that it [changes] affected me that much
Openness to change	I could be very open to accept new opinions
Degree of change	the amount of...how much affected me
Freedom of expression	I could talk to them and feel very comfortable to express my feelings
Openness to the other	they're ready to open up these really hard tough questions... everyone knew that this is what we are coming for
Openness: lowering defences	Didn't feel like I have to...put up guards
Seminar as well organised (factors facilitating process)	thoughtful in everything...the way that we had some days that were very fun
Empowerment	The people in the room...between us we should decide what we want it to be.
Meeting 'the other'	I had a lot of ideas about the other side. But this was the first time I met people in person
Experience of strong emotions	I didn't expect to have those feelings for the 48' Palestinians. Those ideas were very, very strong
Sharing common ground	Just like me we had something in our thoughts
Closeness/Intimacy	I felt so close to them in ways that I couldn't be as close to them in other topics
Emphasis on listening and understanding	It really felt like we wanted...to figure this out. Wanted to understand the other side
Limited contact	There is hardly any connection
Reality of conflict: complex	They [Palestinians] feel very, very disconnected to the country and to their own people
Seeing differently	That really made, made me understand how the problem is bigger
Focus on identity	Palestinian identity is very like divided
Presence of divide as hard to ignore	We felt as Israelis we're not allowed to walk into that space when it was the two groups together

Unity as a strategy for survival (group identity)	We're trying to create this wall like we're one people we're one group you're not going to divide us.
Superficial divide	I felt like it doesn't mean a lot
Group identity and the centrality of shared belief/values	We didn't care about the one thing that we could say together
Group confidence and outgroup mistrust (group identity)	they're scared of things sometimes...because of this big brother that's always there watching which was terrifying to feel
Lack of confidence/feelings of safety	Our nation [Israel] is the Big Brother that makes it impossible for them to even have a normal conversation
A difference in narrative	When you go and talk to them like personally almost all the answers were different
Difficulty overcoming barriers	That barrier that they tried to create...I felt it very strongly
Group work as meaningful experience	Group to group...that was a very, very powerful session
Expression and processing of emotion (facilitating process)	Tough answers and questions...came up but it was very interesting to open these things up
Experience as challenging but meaningful	Didn't always feel like it was the best way to do it...But...this is the only way to have a conversation
An unusual experience	Also felt like a little bit like unnatural
A meaningful experience	This was very powerful
Openness: readiness to talk	They were really ready to talk and express
Overwhelming emotion/experience	This is crazy...why is there such a big difference between the Palestinians and Israelis
Maintaining relationships	There's a few people that kept in touch
Friendship beyond conflict lines	I went to...a friend of my friend in Bethlehem
Change as meaningful	Shows a lot of like what I could feel like I could do, I didn't feel like I could do that before
Change as impacting	Taking a taxi and telling them I'm not Israeli that's like a big thing
Facilitating process: space for dialogue	We as Israelis and Palestinians don't have hardly any of these places to talk
Friendship as problematic: difficulty of dialogue	It doesn't always feel like people are ready for these conversations
Dialogue as means of confronting reality	This was a place like actually...to confront the things that I think was the reality
Questioning reality: notion of 'the other'	is there...such a clear way of defining the other side. What does that even mean?
A neutral space (for dialogue)	Three groups in a different place, like far away. That was so important

Relationships as possible	We could hang out all the groups together
Need for reflection	We needed just to talk our language, talk things through
Group as providing closure	I could talk about the same things with my friends from the Israeli group, it could...finish the whole deal
Importance of sharing space	Three of us together, one from each group. That was very helpful
Value of personal dialogue	They made us talk about, very personal things
Facilitating process: breaking the ice	This is how we're going to feel more comfortable with each other.
Seeing differently: 'the other' as human	First, we are people
Facilitating a process: providing reassurance and safety	The way they created this safe place for all of us
Reality of conflict: living with fear	We're scared that we're going to go home and somebody is going to...magically just take away our permit to go into Jerusalem
Need and desire for freedom	I need to have the freedom to just leave Bethlehem
Dialogue as a form of coping with grievance/core pain	We're here just because it's helping us figure out our core, our issues. And it's helping us
Normalization as problematic	No way are we going to have a meeting up after...Because that's normalization
Issue of third party interference	Palestinian committee members...it felt like they weren't always as objective as the Israeli ones
The experience of negative stereotypes	I'm like a bad guy just because I come from the people that are making the other side's life miserable
Limitations of dialogue: limiting space	She didn't really give him the place to say what he wanted to say
Reality of conflict: change as problematic	This whole thing is like a big game like it can't actually change anything.
Dialogue as promoting change	we were trying to create this conversation that like as if we could...What would we do?
Questioning self and reality	The whole idea of what's law what's legal and who defines legal...oh my gosh this is so crazy
Finding clarity in self (process)	I had a lot of ideas that from the situation became very clear and stronger

Appendix 11

Table 4 Analysis of Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality.

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total Score for Global Empathy (PRE)	.948	23	.262
Total Score for Global Empathy (POST)	.932	23	.124
Total Score for Openness to the Other (PRE)	.951	23	.312
Total Score for Openness to the Other (POST)	.903	23	.030
Total Score for Intergroup Reconciliation (PRE)	.910	23	.040
Total Score for Intergroup Reconciliation (POST)	.823	23	.001
PRE_Behaviour_Total	.944	23	.223
POST_Behaviour_Total	.929	23	.106

Table 5 Analysis of Skewness and Kurtosis tests of normality.

		Statistic	Std. Error
Total Score for Global Empathy (PRE)	Skewness	-.204	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-.42	
	Kurtosis	-1.081	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	-1.16	
Total Score for Global Empathy (POST)	Skewness	-.115	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-.24	
	Kurtosis	-1.294	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	-1.38	
Total Score for Openness to the Other (PRE)	Skewness	-.192	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-.40	
	Kurtosis	.045	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	.05	
Total Score for Openness to the Other (POST)	Skewness	.850	.481
	Skewness/S. E	1.76	
	Kurtosis	2.758	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	2.95	
Total Score for IntReconciliation (PRE)	Skewness	-.627	.481

	Skewness/S. E	-1.30	
	Kurtosis	-.566	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	-.61	
Total score for IntReconciliation (POST)	Skewness	-1.099	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-2.28	
	Kurtosis	1.106	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	1.18	
PRE_Behaviour_Total	Skewness	-.689	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-1.43	
	Kurtosis	.330	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	.35	
POST_Behaviour_Total	Skewness	-.754	.481
	Skewness/S. E	-1.56	
	Kurtosis	.898	.935
	Kurtosis/S. E	.96	

Figure 1. Profile box plot for pre-test behaviour total score.

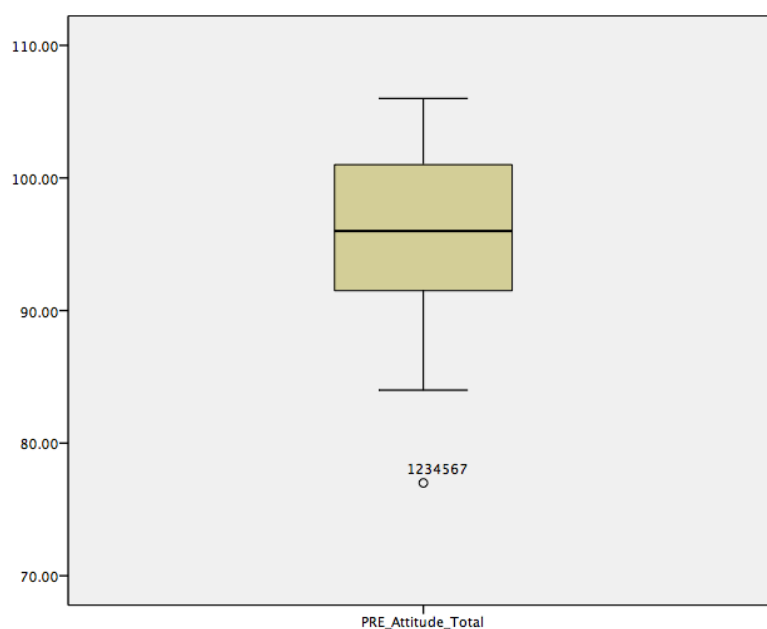


Figure 1.1 Profile box plot for Post-test Behaviour Total Score.

